The Workingman's Christ

Craig S. Thoms

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THE WORKING MAN'S CHRIST

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BY
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Author of "The Bible Message for Modern Manhood"

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To the
memory of my
FATHER AND MOTHER
whose hands were always busy,
who taught their sons to toil,
and who ever counted
righteousness the
highest gain

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PART I

THE CHURCH AND THE WORKING MAN

I

SOME PRESENT CONDITIONS

FOR half a century or more the relation between capital and labour has constituted one of the most important problems before our nation and the world. Though as old as history, the problem has taken on new significance with the freedom which comes with democracy. Of late years in this country the power of both labour and capital has increased with marvellous rapidity. On this account there is doubtless a time ahead of us different from any former time in history. Labourers are many, while capitalists are few. Yet our government is presumably, and indeed more and more actually, by the people, of whom labourers constitute a large and growing part.

WARNING

At a recent dinner in New York (1912) Judge Gary, as reported by the New York *Sun*,

said: "I tell you, gentlemen, that there are things being said nowadays which are very similar to things said just before the French Revolution. I tell you that the spark may yet make a flame, and that soon. I have an especial reason for saying this, a reason that affects you and me. Men of great power and influence in the affairs of the country have not all of us done the fair thing. It is imperative that something be done to improve the condition of mankind. Cannot we ourselves do something to improve that condition? Let us not be resentful towards criticism, but let us benefit by it. I say that it is not only good morals but good policy likewise to improve those conditions. Unless capitalists, corporations, rich men, powerful men, themselves take a leading part in trying to improve the conditions of humanity, great changes will come, and they will come mighty quickly, and the mob will bring them.

"I appeal to you that in your dealings with men under you you take great care to be sure that you are doing the square thing by them."

Such words from the president of the United

States Steel Corporation are significant, and doubly so when taken in connection with what the New York *Tribune* said about the same time, viz., that "exclusive of the wrecking of the Los Angeles *Times* building, there were 'two explosions in 1905, nine in 1906, six in 1907, twenty-six in 1908, twenty in 1909, twenty-five in 1910, and thirteen in 1911.'"

When this statement was made there were fifty-four men, prominent in labour circles, under indictment for complicity in these and other explosions.

In a recent volume Henry C. Vedder points to the fact that less than one per cent of the population of the United States own over seventy per cent of the wealth, and significantly remarks: "It is a sinister fact that something very like hatred is growing in American society towards the brutality of wealth that revels in luxury and makes ostentatious display of its wicked waste while the poor starve. For they who look on at this display, as vulgar as it is wicked, know well that in order that these may enjoy what they did not produce, it was necessary for other

men to produce what they are not permitted to enjoy." *

Shall the American people continue to believe that tariffs protect our labourers in the face of Commissioner Neill's report upon the strike in the woollen mills of Lawrence, Massachusetts, in which it was shown that about one-third of the operatives covered in the investigation received less than seven dollars per week, and that a father, unless working in the better paid occupations, could not possibly support a family of five? Instead of our workmen being protected against European conditions, capitalistic greed is rapidly developing the worst European conditions in this country. An American baronage is springing up which has no chivalry and sheds no tears, which is doing its utmost to stamp out industrial democracy, a democracy impossible until people work for the good of the whole instead of for themselves.

* *Socialism and the Ethics of Jesus,* pp. 238, 240.

A RELIGIOUS PROBLEM

The relation between capital and labour is, not simply economic, nor wholly social or governmental, but religious and ethical, for ethical democracy is the foundation of all human society. The deep down questions are those of righteousness and brotherhood. Where mutual interests are lacking or unrecognised these have always been the fruit of religion. Unless religion secures righteousness and produces brotherhood we must look for religion to be neglected. Jesus said, not only that the unproductive tree was to be hewn down (Luke 13:7), but also that a tree was to be judged by its fruit (Matt. 12:33).

THE INTEREST OF THE CHURCH

The church of Christ is vitally interested in all economic, social, and governmental questions. Her very existence depends upon the righteousness which she helps to produce in men, and between man and man, for people will not long remain adherents of a re-

ligion that does not help to secure righteousness; and unless the fruit of the church's endeavours be manifest in brotherhood, one of the chief purposes for which she labours fails of realisation.

But if the church as an organised body should advocate all that people want her to advocate, and undertake to do all that people want her to do, she would be a strange institution indeed, and in the multiplicity of her undertakings would doubtless neglect and even forget the spiritual purpose for which Christ sent her into the world. After listening for an hour one evening to a temperance lecturer heaping abuse upon the church, I asked her if practically all members of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, the Anti-Saloon League, and the Prohibition party were not members of the church. She admitted that they were. It seemed not to occur to her that she had been abusing the best friends of the cause which she represented. On another occasion a young man, in addressing an audience on Boy Scouts' work, affirmed that the scout movement was organised because the

churches had neglected the boys, while, as a matter of fact, the scout work represented by the audience which he addressed was started by a minister, studied out by a church committee, organised by the representatives of all the churches in the community, and by them broadened to take in all the boys of the town.

The church is interested in every good work, and her members are not only identified with all good enterprises, but are leaders in them. The first business of the church, however, is spiritual. Her task is, not to sell groceries but to make grocerymen who will be just in their weights and measures; not to mine coal, but to produce mine owners who will deal fairly with their men, and men who will do an honest day's work. Working men need to recognise the fact that "the great social and industrial movements of to-day have a very definite religious significance; that the questions arising out of them will never be solved as mere questions of politics or economics; that they must be treated as spiritual movements if they are

to be properly directed." * The church will be most helpful to all classes by holding resolutely to her spiritual task, and making everything else secondary. This was Christ's method, and the church should follow it.

WORKING MEN DEFINED

If we are to clearly understand the limitations of our subject the term, "working man," must be defined. Speaking on one occasion to working men, a professional man said: "I do not know much about horny hands, but I know a great deal about horny brains." The term, "working man," however, has come to have a specific meaning, signifying for the most part those who work with their hands by the day, week, month, or piece. Recently, and with the spread of labour unions, the term has been broadened to include the more genteel occupations, such as those of clerks and stenographers; also most of the semi-professional occupations, such as those of engineers and skilled

* W. Hardy Harwood, in *The British Congregationalist*, 1912.

mechanics; while the social spirit of these classes is rapidly extending to the professions, especially that of teaching.

WORKING MEN AND THE CHURCH

Much has recently been said and written about the alienation of working men from the church. This fact—and it seems to be a fact in large cities—is doubtless over-emphasised, or at least not fully understood.

Dependence on the church as an institution has been decreasing in this country for a hundred years. The reasons, which are many, will be given in succeeding chapters. All classes are affected. The time was when farmers drove half a dozen miles to the village for morning worship, and most of the ministers came from rural districts. Churches in the country were well sustained, and religious meetings in schoolhouses were common. Now, on the contrary, one of the most serious problems in church work is "the neglected rural districts." But the rural population to-day for the most part is not of the same nationality,

nor has it the same traditions, as the rural population of fifty years ago.

Fifty years ago denominational colleges were many and strong compared with other colleges and universities; the proportion of Christian students in them was large, revivals were frequent, and religious life earnest. Now, on the contrary, state universities are numerous and well equipped. Some of them have thousands of students, and the proportion of Christian students in attendance is not so large as in denominational schools. It is to be wondered at, therefore, that notwithstanding this fact, in all the colleges and universities of the country taken together to-day, every other student is a church member as against one in ten one hundred years ago.*

Among professors, lawyers, physicians, merchants, indeed among all classes, there is a decreasing attendance at church services. The children of immigrants, many of whom enter professions and business, are different, both in

* Doughty, *The Call of the World,* p. 21.

religious traditions and ideas, from the youth of half a century ago.

At the present time (1912) a committee in Boston is considering the advisability of uniting three prominent churches into one. Within recent years two of the large churches in Chicago have united, and now there is a plan for a third to join them.

Rev. Charles Stelzle relates that when a Catholic priest was congratulated because the foreigners crowded his church he replied: "In a few years these men will be Americanised, then they will not come."

Neglect of the church, therefore, even by many of its members, is not something peculiar to the working man. Working men are doubtless as numerous, both as members of the church, and as attendants upon its services, in proportion to their numbers as are millionaires in proportion to their numbers.

CRITICISM OF THE CHURCH

The present fashion of criticising the church doubtless indicates the need of a readjustment

of her methods of work to changed social and economic conditions. It is no part of my purpose to plead for the church. Unless her great service to mankind plead for her, she would better remain without an advocate. But all criticism of the church, as of every historic institution, should be just. The church is criticised, for example, because she does not attract greater numbers. That the people do not crowd her doors as formerly, may be a reflection on the church; on the other hand, it may be a reflection on the people. At what time in history have the masses of the people sought the highest things in life? If a Spanish bull-fight were to be "pulled off" in any city of the United States to-morrow, more people would attend it than attend the churches on any Sabbath. That fact casts no reflection on the church, but rather at the crowd at the bull-fight. Let a moving picture show be given in any town hall and it will be filled to the doors. Let one appear in the same hall to lecture on a question of vital social interest and the hall will not be half filled. This fact is no reflection

on the lecturer, but rather on the people. Likewise, the fact that people are alienated from the church may be a compliment to the church, and due to her loyalty to her mission. Did not Jesus indicate that the church would not have the crowd when he said: "Wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many be they that enter in thereby. For narrow is the gate, and straitened the way that leadeth unto life, and few be they that find it" (Matt. 7:13, 14)? Do the socialists scattered through the towns of this country consider the fact that they cannot gather a crowd a reflection on their cause? On the contrary, they are all the more zealous in advocating their claims.

The foundation of sound social and economic conditions is righteousness, and the gate to righteousness is religion, a gate that has never been popular with the crowd, especially in a materialistic and pleasure-loving age. Much as the church is criticised, and welcomes criticism, she is not to be criticised because she does not attract the crowd, at least until the character

of the crowd has been determined. The church has never had the crowd when she was faithful to her mission.

IN THE CITIES

The church is criticised because in the cities she is moving away from the people who need her most. The criticism is just; but a knowledge of the conditions will at least modify it.

"Within recent years forty Protestant churches moved out of the district below Twentieth Street in New York City, while 300,000 people moved in. This is simply typical of practically every city in the country." *

This is a serious indictment; but not yet can the church do as it would like to do in this matter. A church must be supported financially or cease to exist. When members move from the vicinity of their church they would better take it with them than let it die. To support one church where they now live and another where they formerly lived, is a burden that few congregations are able to bear. As a matter

* Stelzle, *Christianity's Storm Centre*, p. 17.

both of fact and of necessity these down-town districts in large cities are turned over to Home Mission Societies, and become the burden and the responsibility of the Christians of the whole country. So rapidly have cities been growing that churches the country over have not as yet been able to adjust either their ideas or their finances to the changed conditions. The readjustment will come in time. The church as a whole will respond, and the destitute districts will be cared for.

LABOUR ORGANISATIONS

In large cities working men are both drawing apart from the church and drawing together to promote their mutual good. They hold meetings to discuss wrongs and agitate principles. New York has her Labour Temple, and Brussels, Belgium, her People's Palace, places dedicated to the good of the labouring man and his family. The Labour Temple is a church with a settled pastor. The People's Palace is devoted to social and economic welfare, but with a noticeable religious element.

In the United States the socialists are composed largely of working people. "In the West in some cities they have organised preaching services, which are presided over by ex-ministers and ex-priests. They have their Sunday schools, in which the socialist catechism is being taught. Training schools for the preparation of socialist agitators and teachers are being supported." *

Such segregation of classes is, to say the least, unfortunate. The labouring people would be an inestimable loss to the church. Yet, the church is not an end in itself, but a means. It can live only by doing its work, and on no other condition ought the church to live. Christianity had to leave Judaism; Protestantism had to leave Catholicism; Methodism, Congregationalism, and Presbyterianism had to leave the Church of England; and the Salvation Army had to leave, not membership in evangelical organisations, but their restricted methods. And it may be that there must come another separation by the working people. By such a

* Stelzle, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

separation Christianity may not be hindered but helped, for Christianity does not depend upon the organised church. Whatever is alive possesses the power of organising itself; and whatever life does not adjust itself to its environment perishes. Yet the segregation of classes is greatly to be deplored, and among a democratic people is dangerous, for it leads to lack of sympathy and co-operation, to misunderstandings and antagonisms.

WORKING MEN NEEDED IN THE CHURCH

The capitalist needs the labouring man in the church more than the labouring man needs the capitalist. They will come together on all other matters far quicker if they sit in the same church and listen to the same preaching. Employer and employee need to be in the same bible class and study the teachings of Christ together.

Objections, of course, are many—that the two classes do not mix, that they are not comfortable together, and that neither wants the other. Jesus Christ felt at home with all

classes; and whatever feelings separate classes and hold them apart, are unchristian, and to be condemned, whether found in labourer or capitalist.

Christianity has always been at its best among the common people. "The church has been most Christian when it was poorest." If working men abandon the church because the employer and the capitalist are in it, they will abandon a most important mission, that of Christianising the employer and the capitalist. Surely it is better that the capitalist be in the church than out, and better that he be associated in the church with working men than simply with those of his own class. Economic justice can be secured only on the basis of common manhood, and Christianity aims to bring all to this common basis.

If working men would have ministers preach the gospel of labour to trust magnates, frenzied financiers, and unscrupulous employers, they should be in church with these men, sit just as close to them as they can, and look the preacher straight in the eye. It is the church

that makes the preacher. It is the congregation that makes the sermon. Of course, the preacher ought to be an angel, but he is not; he ought to secure his ideas and convictions entirely independent of those about him, but he does not; nor does any man ever do so, nor can he do so. In this respect the minister is like other men. And the one way for working men to set all the ministers of Christ to preaching the gospel of labour is, not to abandon the churches, but to fill them.

In a Christian church more than anywhere else all classes meet on a common basis, the basis of the Lordship of Jesus Christ. The teachings of Jesus which have to do with social and economic relations will be discussed in the second part of this volume, and so need not be indicated here; but the setting forth of those teachings to both employers and employees as they sit together to learn of Christ is the surest hope of permanently ameliorating class differences and improving social conditions.

THE ADAPTABILITY OF THE CHURCH

The church has always shown commendable ability in adjusting herself to changed conditions, and never more so than to-day. Her ministers are more ready to change than are men of the legal profession. The law is unspeakably more bound by traditions than theology. Court procedure is less flexible, more filled with tedious technicalities, and more unnecessarily expensive than church procedure. "Even her enemies have been compelled to admit that the church has done more for the common cause of humanity than all other agencies combined." * Labouring men become impatient because the church does not always champion their immediate demands, or adopt their special isms, as, for example, socialism; but could the church bring herself to do so, she would not thereby best help the working man or advance the cause of labour.

Some critics of Christ have asked: "What great book did he write?—What picture did

* Stelzle, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

he paint? What reform movement did he lead?—What contribution did he make to economics, that most vital interest of our time?" * Such criticism fails to discern the most fundamental method of bettering social conditions. To write a book is a small thing, and the book may soon be forgotten; but so to touch life in its fundamental elements that every one who writes will write better, is a great thing, and that Christ did. To have set all the slaves of the Roman Empire free, would have been a small thing, for men would soon have enslaved their fellows again; but so to touch life as to render the permanent continuance of slavery impossible, is a great thing, and that Christ did. To put into operation some economic law, is a small thing, for the designing will evade law, and the wicked will trample it under their feet; but so to touch life as to give every man a desire for a square deal, is a great thing, and that Christ is endeavouring to do.

* See Brown in *American Journal of Theology,* Vol. XVI, No. 1, p. 46.

The fundamental endeavour of the church is the same as that of her Lord, viz., to make better men by bringing them to Christ and teaching them his will. One has significantly said: "It is a fair and necessary question to ask, whether we have not reached the limit in our advance towards public righteousness, without the support of a corresponding advance in personal religion;" * and the *Wall Street Journal* significantly remarks: "The supreme need of the hour is not elastic currency, or sounder banking, or better protection against panic, or bigger navies, or more equitable tariffs; but a revival of faith, a return to a morality which recognises a basis in religion." Whatever we may think of the *Wall Street Journal's* judgment on currency, banking, panics, navies, and tariffs, the significant fact is that the editor places religion in importance above them all.

The first and the great business of the church is to produce in all classes personal religion. Surely working men will think twice before they leave the church and establish a class church

* Tucker, *The Church in Modern Society*, p. 57.

where all do not mingle freely and recognise the authority of a common Lord and Master. Conditions in the church are far from ideal, because Christians are far from perfect; but it is only by keeping together on the religious side of life, where all men have so much in common, that we shall ultimately and permanently draw together on the social and economic side, where at present there are such wide differences.

II

"THE GOOD OLD TIMES" *

IT seems to run in the blood to think that former conditions were better than present conditions. Even in Old Testament times men protested against this folly in these words: "Say not thou, What is the cause that the former days were better than these? for thou dost not inquire wisely concerning this" (Eccl. 7:10). When Elijah fled from wicked Jezebel he fancied himself the only one left who cared for the things of Jehovah; but there were seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to Baal (I Kings 19:10). We are charitable to dead centuries even as we are to dead people; while, as our knowledge increases and facilities of communication multiply, we think the world is growing worse. How can it be otherwise when

* See Dorchester, *Christianity in the United States,* pp. 134-152, 203, 339-349.

our papers are filled daily with the whole world's misdoings?

NON-CHURCH GOING

The common statements that the church is losing its hold on the masses, and that working people are turning away from the church, suggest that at some time in the past nearly everybody went to church. Christianity has yet to see the first century in which a majority of the people willingly attended church services. No century has yet been able to say to Christ, "Lord, what you said about the way of life being narrow, and few entering the gate, and the way to destruction being broad and many walking therein, must now be reversed; for the majority are now entering the narrow gate and few are going the broad way."

Shailer Mathews, writing of New Testament times, says: "In Palestine, as in modern lands, the proportion of those actively engaged in religious service was undoubtedly small. The fact that a village became a town when once it possessed ten men who agreed to be regular

attendants upon the synagogue service, and the additional fact that later it became customary to pay these men for attending service, certainly do not heighten one's confidence in popular piety." *

THE DAYS OF PURITANISM

In this country we have always looked back to the days of the Puritans through the telescope of a fertile imagination, forgetting that New England was not the whole country, and that the Puritans were not the whole people. While our honoured forbears were living godly lives in New England, spiritual affairs were going from bad to worse in both Virginia and Maryland. In Virginia it became necessary to enact laws even requiring ministers to preach regularly every Sabbath; and they were guilty of many "irregularities and vices." In Maryland "the Lord's Day was generally profaned, religion was despised, and all notorious vices were committed, so that it was become a

*A History of New Testament Times in Palestine, p. 160.

Sodom of uncleanness and a pesthouse of iniquity."

Even in New England, after 1662, when the halfway covenant was adopted, religion rapidly declined. Note the complaints of the ministers of the times: "The temper, complexion, and countenance of the churches are strangely altered." "A cold, careless, dead frame of spirit has grown steadily upon them." "Conversions are rare." "The body of the rising generation is a poor, perishing, unconverted, and, except the Lord pour down his Spirit, an undone generation. Many are profane, drunkards, lascivious, scoffers at the power of godliness." "How much is religion dying in the hearts of sincere Christians." "Look into our pulpits and see if there is such a glory there as there once was."

THE GREAT REVIVAL

The great revival under Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield began in 1734 and continued for ten years, its good results being manifest much longer. The time immediately pre-

ceding was one of deadness in the churches and indifference to godliness. "The old doctrines of the fathers had declined and the churches were dead. They were filled with men who had never been converted." Worship was neglected and morals declined. "A worldly spirit prevailed; the young people absented themselves from public worship and the restraints of family influence; licentiousness grossly abounded, and the Sabbath was turned into a day of amusement."

The revival, of course, gave a great impulse to religion, and yet that impulse was not of the most healthy type. A historian, quoted by Dorchester, writing of the century from 1776 to 1786, says: "The churches were built up as to numbers, but largely with earthly materials, and the standard of Christian conduct came to be very low. We talk of the good old times, but all through the last century there were strifes and contentions in many of the churches, such as were far below the Christian standard of the present day. We refer to these things," he says, "not to dishonour our fathers, but

rather to honour the gospel of Jesus Christ in its power to overcome evil and make the world better from generation to generation." *

Dr. Dorchester says: "In respect to the formalities of religion, that age (1776-1786) was in marked contrast with the present. People were more reverent of God, of his church, of the Bible, of ministers and magistrates, and more solemn and devout in worship. Devout, solemn airs, whining tones, and long faces commanded a high premium. But there were less than ten years of good average spirituality in the whole century."

THE PERIOD OF THE REVOLUTION

The quarter-century following the Revolution marks the lowest level of morality in American history. Primitive morality seemed to have passed away. Sabbath-breaking was common, profanity was shameful, and other sins of the grossest character abounded. Note the following ministerial utterances: In 1794 one wrote from Virginia: "The present time is

* *Historical Survey of the Churches, 1776-1786.*

marked by peculiar traits of impiety and such an almost inattention to the concerns of religion that very few will attend, except on Sundays, to hear the word of the Lord." In 1803 one wrote from Cleveland, Ohio: "Infidelity and profaning the Sabbath are general. They bid fair to grow into a hardened, corrupt society." In 1798 the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church expresses itself thus: "We perceive with pain and fearful apprehension a general dereliction of religious principle and practice among our fellow citizens, a visible and prevailing impiety and contempt for the laws and institutions of religion, and an abounding infidelity which, in many instances, tends to atheism itself."

THE FEW

It becomes apparent then, when we look into the actual history, that the "good old times" were not what many have believed them to be; that the masses, on which the church is said to be losing its hold, never came voluntarily and enthusiastically to the church; that work-

ing men as a class, or any other men as a class, who are said to be neglecting the church at present, have always neglected the church. Mr. William Ward says that "in modern times the churches have never drawn the working classes to any appreciable extent." And John M. Gulland, M.P., declares that "if non-church going is an offence, all classes are guilty. The West End is not better than the East End (speaking of London). Working men are no worse than leisured men. This is not a class problem, but a national one." *

The voluntary attendants and supporters of the church from any class and from all classes have ever been the few and not the many. What Christ said about the few and the many has never been reversed by the facts, though it is hoped that it may be reversed in time. He who would stand with Christ has never yet been able to claim the crowd. He has always been one of the few.

* W. Forbes Gray, *Non-Church Going*, pp. 177, 210.

DANGERS

That working men are alienated from the church to-day, especially in large cities, cannot be denied. There are doubtless many reasons, but the chief one would seem to be that the church is not fighting, as the working man thinks it ought, his bread and butter battle. That battle is just. The working man's problem is real, and tremendously important. The church should fight, is fighting, and will more and more fight with the working men.

But working men in their attitude to the church confront a grave danger, the danger which the five thousand whom Christ fed confronted, and for which Christ rebuked them when he said: "Ye seek me, not because ye saw the sign, but because ye ate of the loaves and were filled. Work not for the meat which perisheth, but for the meat which abideth unto eternal life, which the Son of Man will give unto you" (John 6:26, 27). It is the danger of seeking the church for help simply in the bread and butter problem, and not for help in

the religious problem. The labouring man thinks that if he had higher wages he would be content, and he looks for the church to help him in this respect. But contentment does not come with higher wages. The problem lies deeper. One has well said that "the rise in wages, which is one of the most remarkable features in to-day's economic life, has increased rather than diminished this discontent.—The wage-earner no more than the speculator finds discontent diminishing with an increase of income. The more one has, the less content is he with what he gets." * Contentment comes from character. This, Christ sought to give. And unless working men, and all men, come to the church for this, the churches would better be empty and their doors closed.

The bread-and-butter attitude to the church, not only imperils the working man's highest good, but also the church's highest service. The church here confronts a great danger, the danger in which the apostles found themselves

* Mathews, *The Church and the Changing Order,* pp. 117, 118.

when they said: "It is not fit that we should leave the Word of God and serve tables" (Acts 6:2), the danger of putting material things first and spiritual things second. The hope both of the church and of working men is that all classes be led to "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness" (Matt. 6:33). "Insincere, selfish, bigoted as ecclesiasticism has too often been, cautious as are many of its present leaders in making any genuinely social application of its teachings, it is undeniable that at all times, whether past or present, the church has been morally superior to its age." *

The church is the one institution which, notwithstanding many imperfections within, and troublous and ever changing conditions without, has continuously sought to lay the foundations of society in righteousness. And this the church is doing in a more practical way every hour. But the moment the spiritual is neglected or made secondary, that moment the cause of righteousness, both in the individual and society, will begin to wane, and the working man as

* Mathews, *The Gospel and the Modern Man*, p. 311.

well as the church will suffer. Deep down in the heart of things the interests of the church and the interests of working men are one. The hope of a permanently better condition for the working man lies in the authority and the rule of God among men, an authority and a rule that will make men righteous, honest, square, and brotherly. This is precisely the church's point of emphasis, and the church's continuous demand. That emphasis never has been so strong as to-day, that demand never so insistent. "We need revivals if we are not to need revolutions; children growing up in the fear of the Lord more than juvenile courts; illuminated men more than illuminating programmes. And it is the business of the church to see that such men are forthcoming; men of vision, of social sympathy, with consciences trained from childhood to see the moral obligations of corporations and labour unions, each ready to take up his cross, and to teach society to take up its cross." *

* Mathews, *op. cit.*, p. 319.

III

REASONS FOR NON-CHURCH GOING

It is doubtless true that fifty years ago church-going, not only by working men, but by all classes, was more general than now. The nineteenth century began in widespread revival conditions, and those conditions continued intermittently until Mr. D. L. Moody's time, and have not yet ceased.

The claim may be safely made that in proportion to the population in this country church attendance has always been larger than it is to-day; though for certain periods, and in certain places, the claim might be questioned. What then are the reasons for present non-church attendance?

NOT LEGALLY COMPELLED

First, people are no longer compelled by law to go to church as they once were. In Virginia

in 1618 whoever did not go to church on Sunday was compelled to "lie neck and heels" that night, and be a slave to the colony for a week. Four years later whoever, without good excuse, was absent from church one Sabbath was fined a pound of tobacco, and if absent one month, fifty pounds. In 1705, in case one was unable to pay the fine, he was whipped.

Good old Puritan New England, whose people came to America for religious liberty, passed laws compelling attendance at church. In 1692 absence from church for a month was punished by a fine imposed by the civil court. Even strangers, stopping temporarily in a place, were compelled to go to church or to remain quietly indoors.

In the Middle States also, as well as in Virginia and New England, attendance at church was compulsory. Absentees were looked after by officers appointed for the purpose, each of whom was given the care of ten families. His special duty was to see that every member of these families attended church. In some places officials walked the fields two by two in search

of non-worshippers. People standing outside of the "meeting house" during service were put in the stocks. Inn-keepers must clear their houses of all lodgers able to attend church except strangers. As late as 1750 persons in Boston were fined for not attending church; and this law was not erased from the statue books of Massachusetts until 1820.

NOT MORALLY COMPELLED

Long after the law had ceased to compel church attendance, public opinion kept up the custom. One was not held to be respectable unless he attended worship. The community looked askance at him, and he lost caste. Whereas to-day many, when they move from small towns, where community sentiment is strong for the church, and where they attended regularly, cease to be regular worshippers upon going to large cities, where regular religious sentiment is less exacting. Likewise, young men brought up in eastern communities, where church sentiment is strong, sometimes never go to church when they settle in a western frontier

town. Church sentiment is a morally compelling force, and such sentiment remained strong long after the law ceased to require attendance at worship.

ABSOLUTE FREEDOM

To-day there is no compulsion either of law or public opinion. One's social standing or business relations are in no wise compromised if he absents himself entirely from worship. Church attendance, therefore, means more to-day than formerly, having a religious purpose and a moral significance that it could not have under compulsion of whatever sort. That fewer attend church than heretofore does not indicate that people have changed their attitude to the church necessarily, or that the church is losing its hold on the people. In the century briefly reviewed the church had no hold worth mentioning on those compelled by law to attend worship. And in the decades that followed legal compulsion the church had little hold on those who attended through fear of social ostracism. Men are not different than they

were, but simply free to do as they please. Had they been given liberty in the early years of this country they would have neglected and forsaken the churches in multitudes. This fact we see illustrated to-day among peoples who come to "free America" from European countries where church attendance is compelled, either by civil or ecclesiastical law. The second generation in this country is not inclined to yield to ecclesiastical compulsion, while, of course, civil compulsion is no longer imposed, and as a consequence multitudes are "lost to the church."

The church is not alone in this result of the shift from compulsion to freedom. What would be the effect of freedom on the attendance at our public schools? Our children are compelled to go to school by civil law, by their parents, by public sentiment, and through fear of lack of equipment for life, which we studiously foster in them. Take away these compulsions and, it is safe to say, a large proportion of our children would never enter school again. Were they left absolutely free, most of them

would prefer other things to education. The churches, it is truly said, cannot hold the children in the Sunday schools after a certain age. Neither could the public schools hold them under like conditions of freedom.

Neither compulsory church-going nor compulsory school-going is altogether a bad thing, but it is instructive to see how free men use their liberty, and to note the things they choose.

While the church may not gain so rapidly in numbers under freedom as under compulsion, it cannot help gaining in quality. Children who go to school because they want education make the best students; and those who attend church because they want all possible helps to godliness make the best Christians. In church membership number is not so much to be considered as quality, for Christlikeness in Christians is the hope of impressing Christ upon the world.

THEOLOGICAL CHANGES

Changes in theology have also affected church-going. Some earnest souls would have theology stay fixed. But Jesus said to his disciples:

"I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now" (John 16:12). He also said: "He (the Spirit of truth) will take of mine and shall declare it unto you" (John 16:14). In every century since Christ theology has been a growing thing, growth being slowest in centuries that were darkest. Whatever does not grow dies. Growth in theology means that men are coming to a fuller understanding of God's Word, and to a more adequate conception of Jesus Christ. Dr. W. N. Clarke says: "Nor, so long as Christianity is a living thing and not a relic, can any statements of doctrine be final. Thought will always be busy with the great themes, and as long as men think they will see new light. Progress is a necessary form of the life of doctrine, each generation adding something to the work of the past and offering something new to the future. . . . It is quite impossible to say that it (Christianity) will be represented through the ages by unchanging institutions. It is too much alive for that." *

* *The Ideal of Jesus*, pp. 278, 279.

NON-CHURCH GOING

People once looked upon church-going as a sort of religious insurance; but "church-going is no longer regarded as essential to heaven-going." * Men go to church now, not so much because they regard it a religious act to go or a sin to stay away, as formerly, but because they receive help for religious life by going, and because they desire to support what for many reasons the community needs. The reasons for church-going have become less individual and more social, less selfish and more altruistic, less of the nature of a ticket to heaven and more of the nature of helpful service to men. Indeed, people go to church now almost as much to confer blessing as to receive blessing; and those who lack the social spirit drop out of the ranks. Where it is felt that any church is not rendering worthful social service, men of social spirit organise themselves for social service under other forms.

* Gray, *Non-Church Going*, p. 211.

EMPHASIS ON THE PRACTICAL

A third fact that has affected church-going is the shift of interest from the theoretical to the practical, or, in theological phrase, the shift of emphasis from faith to works. The present emphasis is that of James, that faith without works is dead (James 2:20). It is also the emphasis of Christ, that the fruitless tree is fit only for firewood (Luke 13:7). Formerly men were much interested in theology—the plan of salvation, discussions about the nature and person of Christ, heaven and hell, and other kindred subjects. To hold correct ideas on everything theological was deemed, not only of utmost importance for the church, but also essential to individual salvation. To-day, on the other hand, people have ceased to be interested in such discussions; they listen to them with impatience; they no longer believe that salvation depends on correct theological ideas. But the church, like all established institutions, is conservative, both in thought and teaching, and is therefore apt to carry on such discussions

long after people have ceased to hold them of first importance. Under these circumstances many good people lose interest in church services, since to them they seem lacking in practical help for daily life. Yet the event will doubtless prove that conservative progress, so long as it be progress and not a standing still or reaction, makes the greatest speed.

TIME AND ETERNITY

During the past fifty years there has been a remarkably rapid shifting of emphasis from the next world to the present world, and from the enjoyment of Christ's kingdom in heaven to the building of his kingdom on earth.

As always in such rapid change, thought swings to the opposite extreme. At present many would have the church simply serve tables. "Why does the church not promote socialism?" "Why does it not throttle the wealthy exploiters of the people?" "Why does it not secure higher wages and lower prices?" "Why does it not see that all have their

rights?" "Why does it allow sweatshops, unsanitary tenements, and a hundred other evils?" These are the questions that the people, and especially the working people, are asking.

If the church would relinquish its spiritual mission and make itself simply a sociological institution, many would not only attend it, but gladly rush into it. But if the church failed to hold to the spiritual it would ultimately fail in the sociological. If it failed to emphasise the world to come it would ultimately fail to make the right kind of a world here. In Jesus Christ the spiritual and the sociological are conjoined and inseparable. By just so much as the church fails to hold the two in proper balance and proportion, it ceases to be Christian, and must fail in Christianising society. It is folly to longer emphasise the spiritual in religion without applying religion to social conditions; but it is far greater folly to expect social conditions to be permanently remedied while neglecting or ignoring the spiritual. Man is fundamentally spiritual, and if there is

any truth either in the gospel of Christ or in the theory of evolution, he is becoming more spiritual as history advances.

REWARDS AND PUNISHMENTS

Theology has changed also in its interpretation of Christ's teachings about rewards and punishments. No longer are Christ's symbols of fire and brimstone interpreted literally. Meanwhile God's love has been greatly emphasised. As a consequence there are multitudes who do not believe in or fear any hell, who think that the God of love will make no distinction hereafter between sin and righteousness, and who utterly fail to appreciate Christ's fundamental distinctions between sin begetting death and righteousness begetting life. Such people often have no interest whatever in social service, other than securing all their own rights. Why then should they go to church? They have, as they think, no hell to fear; they are quite as good as they care to be; and social service does not interest them. The very growth of religious thought has carried the

whole matter of religion so far beyond them that they are no longer interested in it.

The higher the motives with which you appeal to men, the fewer there are who respond. Many turned from Christ when he ceased to feed them with bread. Many turned from the church when there ceased to be a legal penalty for neglecting worship. Others turn from the church when theology, by interpreting Christ's symbols of punishment spiritually instead of literally, relieves them of the fear of literal hell fire. And selfish Christians lose interest in the church when ministers cease to preach what they believe to be the "pure gospel," and insist that Christians "get busy" being practical brothers to their fellow-men seven days in the week.

THE SABBATH

Our changed ideas of the Sabbath have greatly affected church-going. The Sabbath used to be regarded as a holy day, at least by Christians. In my boyhood home no unnecessary work was done; church-going was a mat-

ter of course; a home Sabbath school was held in the afternoon with my mother as superintendent. On the Sabbath the Bible and good books constituted the reading of the household. The perusal of a daily paper would have been regarded as a sacrilege, the transaction of business a sin. The whole atmosphere of the day was sacred and precious, and wonderfully stimulating to spiritual life.

Christ's statement, that the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath (Mark 2:27), has been interpreted by many so as to rob the Sabbath of spiritual significance or benefit. In the days when bicycles were ridden for pleasure they took young men and women out of evening services by thousands.

One Sabbath afternoon in summer a few years ago I sat on the porch of a home facing Sherman Avenue in Evanston, Illinois—the avenue on which for a little way pass the electric cars which run from Chicago to the woods and parks along the shore of Lake Michigan —and watched the astonishing traffic. Every car that passed north was loaded to the wheels

with well-dressed humanity out for a holiday. One might have thought himself in Berlin on a Sabbath afternoon. Needless to say, these crowds were not in church. Whether their way of spending the Sabbath was right or wrong, it was their way of using their liberty, and of interpreting the teaching that the Sabbath was made for man.

All are aware that automobiles are keeping more people away from church to-day, and especially from the evening service, than bicycles ever did. Bicycles affected only the attendance of young people, while automobiles affect the attendance of whole families.

Owing to the changed ideas of the Sabbath some Christian business men work on their books and students study their lessons on Sunday, and workmen also "in a pinch" work for wages on the Lord's Day. This is not the place to discuss the morality of these things. They are cited simply to indicate how they militate against church attendance.

Some industries run day and night and Sundays for economy of operation, as though dol-

lars were of more value than men. Some men are quite willing to work on Sundays for extra pay. All these things, of course, draw many away from attendance at church. Unless working men to-day hold to the religious sacredness of the Sabbath, working men of the future will have no Sabbath to hold sacred. If men allow themselves to work on the Sabbath for extra pay, the workmen of the future will be compelled to work on the Sabbath without extra pay.

GROWTH OF CITIES

To these theological changes, which have so greatly affected church-going, must be added certain sociological changes. The past fifty years have witnessed a rapid growth of cities the world over, due to many causes. Improved machinery has driven men from the farms; inventions have made great factories necessary; "big business" has rendered offices with scores and hundreds of clerks imperative; and rapid transit has concentrated business at common centres.

But the city is not so favourable to religion as the country or the town. The young man in a boarding house is different from the same young man at home. The young woman working on starvation wages, and living in a single room, is different from her sister living under the protection of the home roof. Large cities hold large numbers of unmarried people without settled homes, whereas the home is the place most favourable to religion.

In the city one's place of residence changes with change of work, failure to pay rent, refusal of a landlord to make repairs, or for other reasons. So shifting is the population in a certain part of Minneapolis that a pastor, only three months after he had taken a church census of his parish, had to take a second census to learn who lived in it. This means the plucking up of families by the roots in their church relations; and many change so frequently that they never get rooted. In addition to these facts, church members, especially young people, who move from country or town to the city often never enter into church relations at all.

While a pastor in Des Moines, Iowa, which at the time had only 60,000 population, I spent much time helping people to dig church letters out of their trunks, but the letters were all that I got for my trouble, as the people had moved about so much that they were dead to the church.

BUSINESS AND AMUSEMENTS

Our day is one of intense business, and just as intense amusement. Between these two the spiritual life is ground as between the upper and nether millstones. So tasking is business, so hard is work, so intense is application, that people demand recreation. Consequently, their evenings are spent at cheap shows and theatres; Sunday finds them at parks, picnics, in woods and fields, attending baseball games, and other sports. All these things, not only keep the careless away from church, but sweep as into a resistless tide many who really care for spiritual things. The church is crowded out of many lives because, after business or work and amusement, there is neither time nor strength left for it.

ACTION VS. MEDITATION

Our day is one of action rather than of meditation. Everybody is on the move. Things must come to us quickly and in small doses. Dickens is tedious. Thackery is verbose. We must have the short story, the condensed magazine article, the book split up into short chapters. People do not like to think; they want to act. To many, therefore, the ordinary church service is tedious, and much of it meaningless, because they have all but lost the meditative, mystical, and imaginative faculties. The prayer in church used to be an hour long, and the sermon two hours long; but now it is a sorry day for the minister when both prayer and sermon are not crowded into forty minutes. From such facts it is evident that, for the less spiritually minded, these conditions are simply a prelude to not attending church at all.

ENTERTAINMENT

Our homes are filled with papers, magazines, and books, all of which are entertaining. On

account of the growing demand for entertainment the church services must be entertaining or they cannot hold the people. Indeed, the church to-day encounters one of its greatest temptations in its conscious competition with the theatre, the moving picture show, the novel, and the magazine in the matter of entertaining the people. It is not easy to entertain with music those who have no ear for harmony, or with art those who have no eye for beauty, or with the Bible or the sermon those who have no love for spiritual things. But unless the church clings to what is spiritual in seeking to entertain she departs from her mission.

RELIGION IN THE HOME

Attendance upon church services is directly influenced by the religious character of the home. Family worship is not the rule in the Christian home as once it was. In my childhood home there were family prayers morning and evening, and grace said at every meal. Children who are trained to worship God in the home regard worship in the house of God

as a matter of course. Worship in the sanctuary also used to be a family matter. The family planned to go to church, the family pew was an established institution, parents and children sat together, and if all members of the household did not report present there was a reckoning later. In the home were both family worship and family discipline, two things of which all too many modern homes are innocent. Most of these former conditions have changed, and the consequent effect upon church attendance has been disastrous.

SUNDAY SCHOOL INFLUENCES

Strange as it may seem, the Sunday school is training the children out of the church-going habit. Indeed, the Sunday school has become the child's church, and to his young mind it is quite sufficient for all purposes. As parents go to church to-day they meet their children, many of whom are members of the church, returning from the Sunday school. The children grow to manhood and womanhood without forming the church-going habit, and with no religious

instruction except what they receive from an over-worked, and confessedly incompetent and inadequately prepared, Sunday school teacher.

What the outcome of these conditions is to be, it is difficult to say, but that we are training the young into non-church going habits is evident. I am one of those who have faith in what seems to be the inevitable drift of things. The drift movements of history are as significant as her constructive processes. It is possible that the church needs to change her forms of worship and her methods of work, and that only the drift of things will force her to it. Her forms and methods are not final, but must ever be changed to meet changing needs.

UNWORTHY CHURCH MEMBERS

Many are alienated from the church and lose faith in her work because of unworthy church members. It must be admitted that there are unworthy church members, and that there always have been such. Even the Lord's disciples had James and John, who wanted the best places; and Peter, who denied his Lord;

and Thomas, who for a time doubted the Saviour's resurrection; and Judas, who betrayed the Master for dollars. Notwithstanding these facts the Twelve were an exceedingly effective company of men, and did a great work. The character of the Twelve is typical of the character of every church, typical, indeed, of the best institution that can be made out of human beings. Like the Twelve, notwithstanding all unworthy members, the church has been a mighty effective institution. Whoever refuses to enlist with other than perfect men or perfect organisations, will have to go out of this world to find his place of fellowship and work.

THE LODGE AND THE CHURCH

Our day is one of multiplied lodges. In North America in 1907 the men and women who were members of lodges numbered 10,104,561. It is calculated that every week 4,000,000 men spend two hours and upwards in lodge meetings.* Not a few place the lodge on the same basis with the church, and say: "The lodge

* Cope, *The Efficient Layman,* pp. 212 ff.

is church enough for us." Not infrequently members of the church give time, work, and money to the lodge who do nothing in their churches. The lodge is more attractive than the church to those who seek simply agreeable associations and mutual benefits, things which in themselves are perfectly right, but not distinctively Christian. Unlike the lodge, the church seeks the salvation of lost men. It gathers into its membership from every class—young and old, rich and poor, those of every previous condition and character. It seeks to serve, not simply its members and their families, but the whole community. It supports representatives in every land for the purpose of carrying the gospel to those who do not have it. As yet many church members, and more who are not church members, are content with the lodge, which properly enough seeks social enjoyment and mutual benefit, objects which are merely incidental to the purposes of the church. The writer finds no fault with the lodge. It does not draw away from the church those who have at heart the purposes of the church, and

what Christ had at heart. It does, however, draw away those who look upon religious things selfishly.

DISCONTENT AND SUSPICION

Widespread economic discontent, coupled with the suspicion that the church is more favourably disposed towards the moneyed classes than towards the labouring classes, is the reason most frequently given for the alienation of working men from the church. This is not the place for discussion as to whether the suspicion is well founded or not, but it should be pointed out that much of the prejudice against the church does not rest on economic grounds at all, although some of it is attached to the economic question. For example, there is the prejudice of ignorance of what the church is doing and teaching by those who never enter its doors; the prejudice of hundreds of thousands of Catholic immigrants against Protestantism, and even against their own church on account of its tyranny in European countries; the prejudice of masses of Jews against Christianity; the preju-

dice of all irreligious men against religion; and the prejudice of the poor against the rich who may be in the church. Whether these prejudices are well founded or not, the church has to bear the brunt of them, and the economic question simply becomes the occasion of their intensification.

UNGODLINESS

But the greatest reason of all for non-church going is that multitudes do not want to be godly. People go where they get what they want. Mr. F. Herbert Stead says: "There is (on the part of the ungodly) a positive hatred of being confronted with high ideals and stern obligations which there is no intention to fulfil. There is the natural repugnance of the frivolous, sensual, selfish soul to facing thoughts of duty, self-sacrifice, eternity, God." *

Notwithstanding, however, all that is here said, one in four of our present population are members of Protestant churches, as against one in fourteen one hundred years ago.†

* Gray, *Non-Church Going*, p. 85.
† Doughty, *The Call of the World*, p. 21.

This long catalogue of reasons for non-church going—and others might be added—certainly illustrates the marvellous vitality and power of the church; for, as stated above, notwithstanding all these adverse conditions, still the church grows in numbers, and she was never more alert than to-day in adjusting her methods of work to changing conditions.

While Christianity in the world does not depend upon the present organisation and methods of the church, the church as at present organised is doing more to promote religion and to teach the ethics of Jesus Christ than all other forces combined.

The important thing for labour is that men be made religious, so that they will fear God and love men. There is little hope for better conditions for labouring men without good government, and good government cannot be had with bad men; without good employers, but bad men do not make good employers; without good labour organisations, but such organisations are not composed of wicked members. The chief hope for the labouring man is that

both capital and labour place the man above the dollar, and in order to secure that end men must be brought to fear God and love their fellows. There must be some institution or organisation which, through evil report and good report, and in the face of all opposition and discouragements, will strive and suffer to make men better, men, not simply of one class but of all classes. So far in history the institutions which have done this have been religious institutions, and in the Christian centuries it has been the church of Jesus Christ.

IV

THE HISTORICAL ATTITUDE OF THE CHURCH TOWARDS WORKING MEN

WORKING men have had no friend like the church in helping them to secure freedom from oppression, improved conditions of labour, increased wages, and the rights of citizens.

The church is not to be sought for these ends any more than Christ was to be sought for loaves and fishes; yet a consideration of the facts should help to make working men well disposed towards the church, and also indicate the immense leverage which the spiritual elements of life have upon material conditions. Jesus was uttering, not merely a religious injunction, but a law of life, when he said: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things (food, shelter, &c.) shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33).

THE PROPHETIC ATTITUDE

The church, when not trammelled by state control, has been the champion of the working man. Its attitude to labour has been that of the Old Testament prophets. Speaking of the unjust rich, Isaiah said: "The spoil of the poor is in your houses. What mean ye that ye crush my people and grind the face of the poor? saith the Lord of hosts" (Isaiah 3:14, 15).

Speaking to the people, Jeremiah said: "God will make you to dwell in peace if ye thoroughly mend your ways and your doings; if ye thoroughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbour; if ye oppress not the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow" (Jeremiah 7:5, 6).

Micah pronounces God's judgments upon those "who covet fields and seize them; and houses and take them"; and who "oppress a man and his house" (Micah 2:2). Amos denounces as "cattle of Bashan" those who "oppress the poor and crush the needy" (Amos 4:1).

Zechariah says: "Thus hath the Lord of hosts spoken, saying: Execute true judgment, and show mercy and compassion, every man to his brother; and oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor" (Zech. 7:9, 10).

Christ clearly indicates his attitude to the oppressing rich when he says: "They which devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers; these shall receive greater damnation" (Mark 12:40). For such teaching they crucified Christ; but his disciples caught the message from his lips, and with it the early church went forth into the Roman world pleading the rights of man, no matter what his station or work.

ANCIENT SLAVERY

In the ancient world, as all are aware, the labour question was the question of slavery, for most of the labour was performed by slaves taken in war, reared in the household, or purchased. Uhlhorn says that Christianity transformed the relation between master and slaves,

that while all believed in slavery, and the Christian church did not entertain the thought of immediate emancipation, "the treatment of slaves by their Christian masters, and the relation of Christian slaves to their masters, underwent an immediate change. They looked upon each other as brethren. . . . As members of the church there was no difference between them. They came to the same house of God, adored one God, acknowledged one Lord, prayed and sang together, ate of the same bread, and drank from the same cup. . . . Masters were exhorted to love their slaves, to be just to them and gentle. . . . Harsh treatment of slaves was considered a sufficient ground for excommunication. . . . Many when they became Christians set all their slaves at liberty on the day of their baptism. Indeed, the act of manumission became a service in the church in which the master led his own slave to the altar by the hand to make him free." *

Dr. Richard S. Storrs says: "From the first slaves were welcomed in Christian congrega-

* *Conflict of Christianity with Heathenism,* pp. 184 ff.

tions on a level of equality with others. By the church in the third century the liberation of slaves was put on the same level of privilege with the rescue of martyrs. Lactantius portrayed emancipation as a principal duty of Christian righteousness. Prayers for slaves were early inserted among the solemn petitions of the litanies. The oblations of harsh masters were refused as bearing on them the odour of a temper not acceptable to God. Bond and free were on the same footing in the house and in the offices of worship. Gladiatorial fights, as a matter of course, were forborne and forbidden; and the royal worth of a soul redeemed unto God by Christ was joyfully recognised by prelates like Chrysostom in the poorest disciple." *

It is recorded in Lecky's *History of European Morals* that "St. Melanie was said to have emancipated 8,000 slaves; St. Ovidius, a rich martyr of Gaul, 5,000; Cromatius, the Roman prefect under Diocletian, 1,400; Hermes, a prefect in the reign of Trajan, 1,250"; that

* *The Divine Origin of Christianity, &c.*, pp. 161, 162.

" in the twelfth century slaves were very rare "; and that " in the fourteenth century slavery was almost unknown." *

In these facts of history the church of Christ is seen at work upon the labour problem at a time when everybody believed in slaves, and Christianity was the one great force at work to free them. All Christians did not free their slaves, nor did they think it necessary to do so. The church did not formally pronounce slavery wrong. And had it done so the labour problem would not have been settled. Indeed, the most perplexing problems arose when slaves were freed. But the spirit of Christ, working gradually in the Christian conscience, wrought increasingly for the rights of the men who were bearing the burden of the world's work; and it did so in days when, as one has said of the first century, " the moral influences of the past seemed to have spent themselves, and no new power of righteousness had arisen for Rome's redemption. Government was an absolute despotism. Society was divided into two classes

* Vol. II., pp. 73 ff.

—many paupers and few rich. Public corruption was not a public disgrace. Gluttony and drunkenness were fine arts, and licentiousness and prostitution a religion. The labourers were slaves; public education, there was none; marriage was a partnership dissoluble at the will of either party." *

During the centuries when the church was large and powerful, and while as yet slavery was held to be a legitimate condition of working men, the church herself held slaves; but so humane was the treatment which her slaves received compared with the treatment accorded other slaves, that those in bondage deemed it a great fortune to be owned by the church. And thus from the very first the spirit of Christ in the church has wrought for the emancipation of the oppressed.

THE PEASANTS

But slavery was only one form of the labour problem. Out of slavery came serfdom, and out of the serfdom of the Dark Ages, which

* Abbott, *The Evolution of Christianity*, p. 173.

need not be discussed here, emerged the peasants of Europe, who were emerging into liberty, and beginning to claim the rights of men. Let it be noted that the wars of the peasants, in which they rebelled against oppression and struggled manfully for their rights, " occurred mostly in connection with the free preaching of the gospel, as by Wiclif and the Lollards in England, and by Luther in Germany." *

Dr. Walter Rauschenbusch points out what at first seems to be a contrary fact, that in Russia, Germany, and France the established church has not been friendly to the interests of labour, and sometimes even by force and massacre, has suppressed the labouring classes.† It is not, however, the church of Christ, free and untrammelled, but the church dominated by the state, that has sanctioned the oppression of labouring men. For centuries the state churches of Europe have not been free from the domination of government. Their inter-

* Schaff, *History of the Christian Church,* Vol. IV., p. 335.

† *Christianity and the Social Crisis,* pp. 319 ff.

ests have all been with established institutions and vested interests. The secular dominated the spiritual. And very often there was little of the spirit of Christ within the church itself. The church was used as an arm of the state. But the spirit of Christ cannot be bound, and will not for long be submissive to secular authority.

In modern history the more spiritually minded men in the church threw off state trammels and organised themselves into the various denominations of Protestantism. In the United States church and state have long been separated, and the cry of Europe to-day is for a like separation. The freedom of the church is the hope of the working man, for only as the church is free can the spirit of Christ within her find untrammelled expression, and the rights of man be championed in the face of all claims of government or of property.

AMERICAN SLAVERY

The church has been assailed for its attitude towards American slavery. In 1846 the Abo-

litionists, in their ardour, and often in the teeth of persecution, said that the churches were the "bulwarks of American slavery"; and we sometimes hear the same statement repeated to-day, just as we hear it said that because the churches do not go over bodily to the Prohibitionist party they are supporters of the liquor traffic. The people who are working for prohibition, with few exceptions, are members of churches; and those who were Abolitionists, with few exceptions, were members of churches. It was John Eliot, the apostle to the Indians, who memorialised the council and governor of Massachusetts against Indian slavery. It was George Keith, a Pennsylvania Quaker, who denounced slavery as "contrary to the religion of Christ, and the rights of man." Christian men were constantly memorialising the assemblies of their own denominations against slavery, and denouncing it as "iniquitous and anti-Christian."

John Wesley and George Whitefield preached against slavery. John Woolman travelled through the Middle and Southern Colonies

" preaching against the practice of holding men in bondage."

For ten years before the Revolution pulpits and pamphlets pleaded for the abolition of the traffic. Christian ministers and Christian laymen were leaders in the agitation. Dr. Samuel Hopkins of Newark, R. I., where slave ships frequently landed their cargoes, preached with all his might against slavery to his own slave-holding congregation, and issued pamphlets " urging the duty and interest of the American States to emancipate all the African slaves." *

The Abolitionist's claim that the churches were the bulwarks of American slavery, finds partial justification in the fact that when the invention of the cotton gin made the work of slaves exceedingly profitable, money closed the mouths of many against the great evil. The churches of the South became all but solid for slavery, and their ministers went to the Old Testament for arguments to defend it. In the

* Dorchester, *Christianity in the United States,* pp. 225-228.

North too they had many sympathisers, both among laymen and ministers.

But even in that degenerate time many raised their voices against slavery, and those who did so were church members. In 1815 Elias Hicks published a radical volume, pleading for abolition. In 1820 ministers in Kentucky and Tennessee endangered their lives by preaching abolition in strong slavery communities. So dangerous did the situation become for Rev. John Rankin and other pastors that, with their whole congregations, they moved out of the South into Ohio. In 1818 Rev. John Gruber was arrested and tried for felony for preaching abolition at a Methodist camp meeting. Roger B. Taney, who defended him, and who was subsequently Chief-Justice of the United States Supreme Court, in defending him said that "the Methodist church had steadily in view the abolition of slavery," that "no slave-holder was allowed to be a minister in it," and that "its ministers were accustomed to speak of the injustice and oppression of slavery."

The Quakers were always against slavery.

From 1815-1830 Benjamin Lundy was a veritable cyclone of abolition sentiment. In his own house he formed the "Union Humane Society," and auxiliaries sprang up wherever he went. It was Lundy who enlisted William Lloyd Garrison, by whom the "Liberator" was launched in 1831. Garrison himself, the great apostle of anti-slavery, though not a church member, was a sincere Christian, and a devout worshipper in the church of Dr. Lyman Beecher. The Bible was his constant companion; the Hebrew prophets, Christ, and the apostles were his models. So strict was he in Sabbath observance that he would not go for his mail or take a walk for recreation on Sunday. He was a great believer in revivals of religion, and held that the good of our country, both temporal and spiritual, depended on them.

But before Garrison's time, and in preparation for Garrison and those who wrought with him, the churches of Christ—sometimes single men, sometimes a few working together, sometimes whole congregations—were preparing the way for the great agitation. There had been

"one hundred and fifty-seven years of anti-slavery seed-sowing by religious men, fifty-eight years of organised movements by societies and conventions, and more than sixty years of legislation against slavery by ecclesiastical bodies." *

Truly does Dr. Lyman Abbott say: "Despite many assertions to the contrary, despite some ground for them in practical apostasy from Christian principle within the church of Christ, it may be safely affirmed that emancipation in Great Britain and in this country would not have been possible but for the influence of Christianity in awakening and strengthening those sentiments of humanity which finally proved too strong for the political and commercial influences leagued together to perpetuate and extend the slave-power." †

I have dwelt at some length upon slavery because it represents both the labour problem and the money power in history, the problem and the power with which working men are face to face to-day, only in other forms.

* *Op. cit.*, pp. 449 ff.

† *The Evolution of Christianity*, pp. 198, 199.

The church of Jesus Christ is the one institution that in every century of the Christian era has pleaded for the labouring man, has sought to ameliorate his conditions, has striven to set him free, and has at length so refined the humanity in man that slavery has been driven from the face of the earth.

The North used to say that the Civil War was fought to free the slaves; the South, that is was fought over the question of union. The fact is that, but for the conviction which the Christian church produced in the North that slavery was wrong, the question of union would not have arisen when it did, and slaves would doubtless have been working on southern cotton fields to-day. Yet they would not have worked there always, for the South is religious, her men are largely Christians, and it would only be a matter of time when the spirit of Christ, working in their hearts, would free every slave.

THE CHURCH AND LABOUR

The labour problem has passed through slavery, serfdom, individual competition, and at

length we have organised labour. To-day great aggregations of capital confront great aggregations of labour. And as yet these two forces are largely antagonistic. Each is seeking to get as much as possible and to give as little as possible.

The labourer has by no means ceased to face the question of slavery, for there is no more effective lash than a weeping wife and hungry children; and liberty to beg or starve or work for just enough to keep soul and body together, with no possibility of providing for sickness and age, is not economic liberty of much value, especially when others are growing inordinately wealthy, and those living in idleness and luxury have power to make us work or starve.

The labour problem is now as always the problem of human rights. The form of the problem changes, but not the essence. Under slavery the question was of one's right to the use of his own body. That right has been won. Now the question is of one's right to live in God's world as a partner with his fellows in

the things that God has made for the use and comfort of the race.

The church of Christ has ever pleaded for the rights of man, and is pleading for them to-day. It has ever put the man above the dollar, and does so now. In days when charity was thought the proper expression of man's humanity to man, the church was the great alms giver, and she is yet the great dispenser of charity. But men do not want charity. They want their rights in God's world, and they ought to have them. Thus the form of the church's ministry changes with new light on human problems, and new convictions as to the form which human rights should take. But whatever the form of her service, the spirit of Christ in the church has always pleaded and worked for the rights of man.

Working men should take note of what the church has been to the cause of labour in the past, and of the fact that she was never so untrammelled as now. Not since the first century has the church been so democratic as at present, and not in all the Christian centuries

has it been so free to think and to utter its convictions, and never has it expressed the mind of Christ on social questions so insistently and commandingly to those in power.

RAPID CHANGES

Like every other historic institution, the church is naturally conservative. It is best for labour that she should be so, for the problem of human rights is not the problem of a day. During the present century new problems have sprung up out of new conditions like growths in springtime. Answering to these conditions, there is no time in the church's history when she has made more rapid adjustments to serve humanity effectively than she is making at this hour. One of the most apparent of these adjustments lies in the fact that she is turning towards the working man to champion his rights against the tyranny of capital.

In 1908 there was held in Philadelphia a "Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America." Thirty-three denominations were represented, comprising 18,000,000 members,

and 40,000,000 adherents. The way in which these Christians concerned themselves with the working man's interests, is indicated by resolutions which said among other significant things along the same line:

"We deem it the duty of all Christian people to concern themselves directly with certain practical industrial problems. To us it seems that the churches must stand—

For equal rights and complete justice for all men in all stations of life.

For the right of all men to the opportunity for self-maintenance, a right ever to be wisely and strongly safeguarded against encroachments of every kind.

For the right of workers to some protection against the hardships often resulting from the swift crisis of industrial change.

For the principle of conciliation and arbitration in industrial dissensions.

For the protection of the worker from dangerous machinery, occupational disease, injuries, and mortality.

For the abolition of child labour.

For the suppression of the 'sweating system.'

For the gradual and reasonable reduction of the hours of labour to the lowest practical point, and for that degree of leisure for all which is a condition of the highest human life.

For such regulation of the conditions of toil for women as shall safeguard the physical and moral health of the community.

For release from employment one day in seven.

For a living wage as a minimum in every industry, and for the highest wage that each industry can afford.

For the most equitable division of the products of industry that can be ultimately devised.

For suitable provision for the old age of the workers and for those incapacitated by injury."

This council recommends also:

"That the churches more fully recognise, through their pulpits, press, and public assemblies, the great work of social reconstruction which is now in progress, the character, extent,

and ethical value of the labour movement, the responsibilities of Christian men for the formation of social ideals, and the obligation of the churches to supply the spiritual motive and standards for all movements which aim to realise in the moral social order the fulfilment of the second great commandment, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.'" *

During all the Christian centuries, wherever it has been free, the church of Christ has championed human rights, and as long as it retains the spirit of Christ it will continue to do so.

*Quoted from Stelzle, *The Church and Labour,* pp. 35 ff.

V

WHY WORKING MEN SHOULD STAND BY THE CHURCH

FAVOURABLE as the historical attitude of the church has been towards labour, that attitude is nothing to the working man to-day unless the church is still on the side of the labourer and helping him to secure his rights in the battle which he is fighting now.

Lowell's words "On the Capture of Fugitive Slaves near Washington" are as pertinent to the labour problem now as when they were written:

"Shame on the costly mockery of piling stone on stone
To those who won our liberties, the heroes dead and gone,
While we look coldly on and see law-shielded ruffians slay
The men who fain would win their own, the heroes of to-day.

"He's true to God who's true to man; wherever wrong is done
To the humblest and the weakest, 'neath the all-beholding sun,

That wrong is also done to us; and they are slaves most base,
Whose love of right is for themselves, and not for all their race.

"'Tis ours to save our brethren, with peace and love to win
Their darkened hearts from error, ere they harden it to sin;
But if before his duty man with listless spirit stands,
Ere long the Great Avenger takes the work from out his hands."

No matter what the church has done in the past, God will take the work from out her hands unless she does her duty and fulfils her mission in the present.

THE POWER OF RELIGION

The labouring man should have a care lest he separate his cause from the mightiest force in the world, which is religion. But for religion the Jews never could have maintained their distinctive character under the lash of slavery, beneath the grinding heel of tyranny, in the loneliness of captivity, through the devastations of war, and while scattered, as they are to-day, throughout the world. A little com-

pany of Christians entered the Roman world like sheep in the midst of wolves, and by the power of religion conquered it, overthrew its customs, and determined the character of the succeeding civilisation. It was religion that in the Crusades led multitudes to renounce all their worldly possessions, sent hundreds of thousands marching to the rescue of Christ's sepulchre, and transformed the face of Europe. No wars in history have been so fierce and stubborn as religious wars. A man will walk through fire and blood, leave country, home, wife, and children, indeed all that he has, for his religion. Abraham, leaving country and home, and proceeding to sacrifice his only child upon the altar that his own hands constructed for the purpose, is typical of the power of religion in all time.

If labouring men but have religious conviction on their side, nothing can defeat them. Not civilisation, but religion stopped the exposure of infants in Greece, put an end to the cruel sacrifice of human life in the Roman gladiatorial shows, and in century-long struggles struck the shackles from both body and mind.

From the pagan standpoint the capitalist is sufficiently civilised. He is educated, refined, informed, travelled, a lover of art and literature. But he is not sufficiently Christianised. He lacks socialised religion. Dr. Edward T. Devine, after naming nine other needs of a community, says:

"The final condition of our ideal community, which I name not lightly, nor yet with misgiving, is religion. Even in our imperfect world we have the redeeming and purifying influence of religion. It is the greatest thing in the world, but it is not yet social. . . . In a religious community it is necessary that those who have the religious spirit have the social spirit also." *

Truly does Dr. Lyman Abbott say: "Christianity is turning the world upside down, and will not cease so to do until the world is right-side up. That all service is honourable, and all idleness is a disgrace; that to get money by whatever strategy without furnishing an equivalent is a dishonourable spoliation; that wealth

* *Misery and its Causes*, pp. 251, 252.

is a trust, and that men are to be measured, not by what they possess, but by what use they make of it; that things are for men, not men for things, and that any civilisation is wasteful that grinds up men and women to make cheap goods; that industry is not righteously organised until it is so organised that every honest and willing worker can find work, and find work so remunerative as to give him and his children an opportunity for self-development as well as for mere life—these are some of the axioms of Jesus Christ." *

Religion has been, is, and always will be the mightiest power in the world to secure these ends. And if working men do the best for themselves, they will link their cause to the power of religion.

RELIGION INCREASINGLY SOCIAL

Religion is turning with amazing rapidity to inquire what the mind of Christ is for men's social and economic relations. So rapid is this change that older Christians lament the appar-

* *Evolution of Christianity*, p. 201.

ent drift from the old standards. They miss the teaching of former days about faith, justification, sanctification, atonement, reconciliation, and forgiveness, doctrines which are true and needed, but which are all but overshadowed by the emphasis now placed on the social ethics of Jesus. Older Christians are also perplexed, and almost dazed, when there comes ringing from the pulpit the message of brotherhood in social and economic relations.

This social message marks a distinct era in the history of the church. The church had its theological era, just as the world had its philosophical era, and the two existed at the same time. Theology, like philosophy, had its day and ran its course; and in the future both will doubtless have another day, and run another course. But ours is the democratic era: its voice is the voice of the people; its questions are questions of human rights; its greatest science is the science of living together. The cry of Christian thinkers, heard for the past twenty-five years, "Back to Christ," means that Jesus Christ has a message for our social century,

a message that heretofore has neither been sufficiently understood, nor adequately emphasised; it means that the church is inquiring what that message is, and insisting that it be applied to the conditions under which we live. If labouring men are leaving the church they are leaving their best friend, and disassociating themselves with the mightiest force on earth for their help.

THE CHURCH AND OUR SOCIAL SYSTEM

Rev. Charles Stelzle rightly says: "Working men should be informed that the church does not endorse the present social system. It accepts only so much of the present system as is in accordance with the principles laid down by Jesus Christ. It insists that these principles shall be applied to society in all its ramifications." *

At no time in history has Christianity accepted the existing social system. Jesus came to set up a new and different social order, which he called his kingdom. John in his vision, re-

* *Christianity's Storm Centre*, p. 37.

corded in Revelation, saw that new social order descending out of heaven to be upon the earth in the form of the "New Jerusalem," in which there was to be nothing impure or unrighteous. The early Christians, misunderstanding both Christ and John, looked upon the existing social order in despair, and regarded it as irredeemable. For this reason they forsook society for the monastery and the hermit's cave, and in theory lifted the kingdom of Christ into the hereafter.

Until very recent years many have believed in what they called the end of the world; they have looked for a spectacular second coming of Christ, when the present social order should come to an end, evil persons be separated from the good, and social readjustment made in another world. These ideas are still common among Christian people; and the New Testament gives warrant for them, though one may not be sure of the precise programme. Whatever views the church, or individual Christians, may hold regarding future changes, one thing is clear, that the church has never accepted the existing

social order. And to-day the emphasis of the church is upon Christ's kingdom in this world. That kingdom means a social order purged of injustice, social relations which express the mind of Christ, conditions in which all hold Christ as Master and are brothers to one another. In a word, the present insistence of the church is that the social order become increasingly Christian until social relations express the mind of Christ.

Never before has the church turned so swiftly to fight the working man's battle. And it is turning to fight his battle, not to win working men to the church, desirable as that is, but because the working man's battle is the battle of this century, his question the question of human rights, his problem the problem of democracy, and his claim to economic and social justice an expression of the mind of the Master. The church of Christ does not believe in a few excessively rich while the many are excessively poor; it does not believe that a few should be in possession of natural resources while others beg for work that they may live; it does not

believe that some should loll in idle luxury while others are overworked and underfed; it does not believe in sweatshops, unsanitary tenements, child labour, and the shameless degradation of women through industrial oppression.

The church insists, as it has always insisted, that the present social order is wrong, and must be made over anew. Not competition, nor oppressive combination, but love must become the social law; not dollars, but men are in the making. Members of the social order must cease to get as much and give as little as they can, and must come to serve one another as truly as they serve their God. Men must cease to bind the burden of the world's toil on the shoulders of others, and must instead bear each other's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.

Dr. Rauschenbusch puts the mind of the church on this matter in a nutshell when he says: "The law of Christ, wherever it finds expression, reverses the law of trade. It bids us demand little for ourselves and give much service. A mother does not try to make as rich a living as possible, and to give a minimum of

service to her children. It would be a sorry teacher who would lie awake thinking how he could corner the market in education and give his students as small a chunk of information as possible from the pedagogic ice-wagon. The relation between a minister and a church is Christian only when the church pays him as well as it can afford to do, and he gives as whole-hearted and complete service as he can get out of himself. There are some professions and some social relations which are in the main dominated by the Christian conceptions of solidarity and service, and they are the only ones that arouse our enthusiasm or win our love. Industry and commerce are not in that class." *

But the insistence of the church to-day is that industry and commerce must come into that class; that they, as well as all other human interests, are meant to express the mind of the Master, and should be governed by his spirit of love and service.

* *Christianity and the Social Crisis,* p. 311.

THE CHURCH MISJUDGED

In his attitude to the church the working man should not allow himself to be governed by his prejudices. Not infrequently if the employer is in the church, the employee condemns it; if the rich are in the church, the poor turn away from it. Such class prejudice is an injury both to capital and labour, a cause of misjudging the church and grossly misunderstanding her mission. As stated in a former chapter, much of the prejudice of labouring men against the church does not rest on economic grounds. Dr. Shailer Mathews calls attention to the fact that "our wage-earners, to a very large extent, are foreigners owing a more or less sincere allegiance to the Roman Catholic church." * They, of course, are hostile to Protestantism, not on economic, but on religious grounds. The same author says that "many of the leaders of discontent are Jews who in the reaction from Talmudism find themselves without any religion whatsoever." † On religious grounds they are

* *The Church and the Changing Order*, p. 119.
† *Op. cit.*, p. 120.

hostile to Christianity in any form. In 1906 Edward A. Steiner wrote that, "roughly speaking, nearly eighty per cent of our present immigration is made up of Roman Catholics, Greek Catholics, Greek Orthodox, and Jews. . . . To the large majority of those who come, nationality or race and the church are one and the same. . . . The Pole, for example, is a Catholic by national instinct, . . . while the Jew is a Jew by race and faith, regarding as a profligate him who betrays his people by becoming a Christian." * These Catholic peoples bring their own priests with them, priests who are hostile, both to Protestantism and to our national ideals. "The sooner the Catholic church can get rid of Polish and Italian priests who have been trained in Europe, to whom religion is a sort of politics—and a certain kind of politics is religion—the better for the church and, of course, the better for the state." †

Then there are those who, not being religious

* *The Trail of the Immigrant,* p. 322.
† Steiner, *op. cit.,* p. 323.

themselves, are hostile to all institutions of religion. There is also much prejudice against the church due to ignorance. In any city or town there are those who, if asked what the church teaches, would give an answer that would apply to the days of their boyhood, thirty or forty years ago. They have not been in touch with the thought of the church for half a lifetime. About the church's teaching and endeavours in the sociological and economic fields, they know nothing. In their Sunday newspapers they read a smattering of evolution and infidelity, while they think that the pulpit is still preaching an ecstatic heaven and a literal hell fire.

The message of the church to-day is becoming more and more a social and ethical message. It does not forget the strictly religious message, but it insists that true religion must express itself in right sociology and right economics, and that socialised religion means brotherhood.

RELIGIOUS LITERATURE

A large part of the literature of the church to-day is a plea for working men. A great denominational journal recently contained an article on "Christianity's Social Message," with the following sub-heads: "Conditions not Normal," "Christianity has a Message," "Work a Part of the Programme of Life," "Every Workman Entitled to a Living Wage," "The Capitalist Entitled to a Living Income," "Christianity Recognising its Responsibility." * And this is but a sample of what is common in all religious magazines.

About fifteen years ago Rev. Charles M. Sheldon published "In His Steps," comprising the chapters of a story that he had delivered from his pulpit. The contention of the story was that every one's duty was to practise the ethics of Jesus in all social and commercial relations. This was by no means the first volume of like import. But since that time Christian men have published in this country a whole

* *The Standard,* Chicago, March 16, 1912.

library of books addressed to the church itself, pointing out the duty of Christians to practise the ethics of Jesus, and, in one form or another, insisting upon the rights of labouring men. There is no space here to give even a list of such books. They are of the character of *Christianity and the Social Crisis,* by Walter Rauschenbusch; *Christianity's Storm Centre,* and *The Church and Labour,* by Charles Stelzle; *The Social Teachings of Jesus,* and *The Church and the Changing Order,* by Shailer Mathews; *The Ideal of Jesus,* by W. N. Clarke; *Jesus Christ and the Social Question,* by Francis G. Peabody; *Misery and its Causes,* by Edward T. Devine; *Socialism and the Ethics of Jesus,* by Henry C. Vedder.

The most virile minds of the church are writing on sociology, championing the rights of working men, and insisting that Christians shall reconstruct social and economic relations on the Christian basis.

There is scarcely a Protestant pulpit in the land of any prominence that is not preaching the duty of social service, and emphasising the

fact that, while a man should seek to save his own soul, he cannot save himself unless he serve his brother man. The church, like every other institution, must be judged by her leading spirits, for these both adjust her life and work to the problems of the present, and determine her future character.

THE MAN BEFORE THE DOLLAR

In this late literature, and in Protestant pulpits, the specific and insistent claim of the church is that the man is before the dollar. This was the claim of Jesus when he inquired, "How much then is a man of more value than a sheep?" (Matt. 12:12). Whatever its form of expression, this is precisely the claim of working men, that a man is more than a working machine, and is to be considered before money. Labouring men have been wont to complain that the church was the institution of the rich, the capitalist, the employer, the well-to-do. This is not the place to argue the question. If it be true, it ought to mean much to labouring men that the church, in its literature and from

its pulpits, is teaching the rich, the capitalist, the employer, and the well-to-do that man has rights which come before profits, that the well-being of employees is to be considered before the gain of the employer, and that rich and poor are brothers working under Jesus Christ as Master, and that whoever wrongs his brother will have to answer for it to God.

The most virile minds and the leading spirits in the church more and more denounce the worship of mammon, and insist with Edward T. Devine that "no community is so poor that it can afford to permit typhoid for lack of a filter, or inefficient children for lack of good schools, or criminals for lack of playgrounds, or wayward girls for lack of protection, or exploited childhood for lack of a factory inspector, or industrial accidents for lack of a compensation law or an insurance system." *

Working men must remember that all reforms come gradually, and after much agitation; that the most deceitful and difficult sin to deal with, either in one's self or another,

* *Misery and its Causes*, p. 272.

is covetousness; that the most stubborn and unscrupulous social factor to cope with is vested interests; that discontent is due not more to low wages than to high wages, which open wide the doors to enlarged desires. The battle of human rights is not the battle of a day, but of centuries. It is, indeed, the building of the kingdom of Christ, in which his prayer that the Father's will be done on earth as in heaven is to find answer.

Surely this is not the time for working men to turn away from the church, but rather the time for them to rally to its support; for the most earnest minds of Christendom are entering into their problems, and insisting upon their rights, while connecting both their problems and their rights with the teachings of Jesus Christ, and declaring that a Christianity without the ethics of Jesus is not an adequate Christianity for the twentieth century.

VI

THE DISCOVERY OF JESUS CHRIST

President Alexander Smith, in an address before the American Chemical Society, said: "At the very start there is difficulty in settling what constitutes discovery. Sheele's preparation of oxygen undoubtedly took place a year or two before Priestley's, but his *publication* of the results was delayed until three years after Priestley's, and priority in discovery is generally held to require priority in publication.

"Again, Paracelsus obtained what is now known as hydrogen by the action of iron filings upon vinegar, but Cavendish *defined* the substance by its properties, and so the discovery dates from 1776. Liebig prepared bromin, but set the example aside, believing it to be a chlorid of iodin, and Balard, who prepared the substance later, and *recognised* it to be a new halogen, became the discoverer." *

* *Literary Digest*, 1912.

This eminent scientist thus includes within the fact of discovery the recognition of true character, accurate definition, and publication. It may seem late to speak of discovering Jesus Christ; but Christ's true character is still under discussion; and he has not yet been accurately defined, or adequately published. There recently came to my table the advertisement of a book written to prove that Jesus really lived,* and the advertisement insisted that there was need for such a work. Theologians have defined and discussed Christ, but their definitions no longer satisfy, and their discussions no longer interest. Of late years critics have investigated and speculated to such an extent that unless one were fully persuaded in his own mind, his knowledge of Christ would be greatly confused, and his last state—in the hands of the critics, would be worse than his first—in the hands of the theologians.

Is Christ to be forever a subject of philosophical speculation, theological discussion, or critical investigation? Christ can be known

* Case, *The Historicity of Christ.*

only as his true nature is recognised, defined, and published in relation to the work which he came to do. His work reveals him. More important than all questions of theology or criticism is the question whether Christ is true for life, whether by believing and obeying him one becomes a better man, and more efficient in helping to build a better society, whether by such belief and obedience there enters one's life a power which raises it to higher potency for righteousness. In this sense alone is it of supreme moment to know Christ; and in this sense he must be known through experience.

KNOWING BY DOING

Jesus said: "If any man willeth to do his will he shall know of the teaching, whether it be of God or whether I speak from myself" (John 7:17). Christ cannot be known through theology, criticism, or philosophy, or through any speculation or investigation whatsoever. These may have their uses; but Christ can be really known only by living like Christ. How much, for example, can one learn about

love by investigation, speculation, or discussion? His investigation may be scientifically accurate, his speculations wrought out with utmost care; yet, as all know, his real knowledge of love begins when his experience of love begins; and it is proverbial that even a little experience of genuine love overturns and casts out a whole headful of theories and speculations about love. Indeed, very little knowledge of love can be conveyed by words, either spoken or written. And what is true of love is also true of sorrow, of joy, of power, of disappointment, in truth, of all the deeper facts of life; they can be fully known only by experiencing them.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF OUR AGE

Whether or not Jesus Christ is fully known to-day may be answered, therefore, by asking whether any age, our own included, has yet done Christ's will. If Christ's words, quoted above, are true, and if their meaning has been fairly illustrated, a speculative age, whether philosophical or theological, cannot know Christ; nor yet an age simply given to investi-

gation and criticism. Only a practical age can know him, an age that requires truth to be expressed in conduct. Herein lies the significance of our own time, which is big with promise both of the knowledge and the power of Christ. Ours is a truth-loving age. Men do not hold the old in awe as formerly. Traditions have no special sacredness. We have a passion for facts, and boast the courage to follow where facts lead. Of men we ask, What can they do? Of machines, What are they good for? Of schools and churches, What are they accomplishing? We are living in terms of action. Our demand is for efficiency. The genius of our times is for deeds. It is in such times if ever that Christ can be adequately known.

THE MEDIA OF INTERPRETATION

None are free from the influence of self-interest. Men necessarily interpret Christ through the media of their own life-conditions. For example, the working man will interpret Christ's law of brotherhood more liberally than the capitalist, for by doing so he has everything

to gain and nothing to lose; whereas, the moment the capitalist admits the labouring man's interpretation all his unjust profits vanish. In Christ's own experience this fact was often illustrated. In answer to his question as to whether John's baptism was from heaven or of men, the Pharisees replied: "If we shall say, From heaven; he will say unto us, Why then did ye not believe him? But if we shall say, Of men; we fear the multitude, for all hold John as a prophet" (Matt. 21:25, 26), an answer shaped, not to express the truth, but for self-defence. Likewise the interpretation of every age is influenced by the interests of the men of that age. An age looking for Christ's kingdom in heaven will not interpret Christ like an age looking for that kingdom on earth. A slave-holding age will not interpret Christ like an age of free men; nor an age of barons and serfs like a democratic age; nor an age of war like an age of peace; nor a capitalistic age like a socialistic age. This explains why men are so slow in coming to a complete knowledge of Christ. Self-defence is the first law of life, and

no age, nation, or person is immune from it. The wider apart, therefore, the interests of men are, the wider apart will be their interpretation and understanding of Christ. The employer's Christ is not precisely the same as the employee's Christ; nor the rich man's just the same as the poor man's. Each interprets Christ for himself through the media of his own conditions and interests. An adequate understanding of Christ can come only with genuine democracy, in which the widely separated interests of men draw together, and the two extremes of society merge into one middle class, where every man considers, not simply his own interests, but also the interests of others. In a word, a complete understanding of Christ can come only with the realisation in life of the kingdom of Christ.

THE METHOD OF REVELATION

The principle that knowing comes by doing is not peculiar to knowing Christ, but applies to the knowledge of truth everywhere. The Bible, for example, is filled with revealed truth.

But the Bible is pre-eminently a record of experience. Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, Samuel, David, and other great Bible characters were men of action, and through their experiences God's truth was revealed. The ethical power felt in reading the Old Testament comes, not so much from its laws and precepts, as from the men who lived the laws and precepts before they wrote them. Consider Abraham at God's command leaving his home and proceeding to sacrifice Isaac; Joseph, sold by wicked brothers, resisting temptation, and through righteousness rising to the governorship of Egypt; Jacob, fleeing from defrauded Esau and finally brought to his knees at Jabbok; Moses, obedient to God's call, triumphing over Pharaoh, the Red Sea, and the wilderness; Joshua, victorious in God's battles, and establishing Israel in the promised land. Consider the years of the Judges; the schools of the prophets; the intermittent wars; the rise of the kingdom under David; the nation divided by internal strife; the numerous captivities; the return of a few, and the heroic rebuilding of the

temple and the holy city. All is a marvellous record of action. Out of experience—experience instructed of God—the nation brought forth the truth.

THE FULNESS OF TIME

It is significant of the same fact that Christ came "in the fulness of time." That is, before Christ could come and work effectively certain great truths must be lived through. For example, before Christ could be understood as the "suffering servant of Jehovah," those to whom he came must have learned what it was to be a suffering servant. This, Israel learned in Egyptian bondage, in Babylonian captivity, in a hundred defeats in battle, indeed, by the crushing disappointments which filled her history.

It is significant of the same fact in our own time that few yet know the blessedness of service. Many hold themselves above it, scorn it, turn from it. The circumstances of life must corner them, the conditions of life must compel them, the experiences of life must lay upon them

a service which they cannot escape. Finally, out of experience if at all, they learn the joy of service, and the richness it gives to life.

MODERN INSTANCES

Modern life, indeed, is filled with illustrations of the fact that knowledge of right comes by doing right. Slavery ceased to be profitable to New England before she was persuaded that it was wrong. The South was compelled by war to put away slavery before her heart turned against it. How tenacious the "spoils system" has been in our politics! Yet, when once we have had experience of the civil service system, we wonder that we were so slow to introduce it. After the Revolutionary War it was not certain whether this nation was to be a kingdom or a republic; but now that we have had experience of a republic, we are forever removed from kings. And thus society proceeds step by step, working out of experience every increment of knowledge.

THE USE OF WEALTH

The social question with which our age is most immediately concerned is the Christian use of wealth. That the love of money is a root of every kind of evil, was never more apparent than now; nor was there ever a more widespread awareness of the fact.

What Christ teaches about wealth is clear enough to most people; but for possessors of wealth to interpret Christ's teachings fairly is almost as difficult as for them to practise his teachings faithfully. Self-interest influences the interpretation, and practice hides behind custom. Some years ago a young man in Oklahoma was notified that he had fallen heir to an estate in Scotland, and went at once with his wife to take possession. He had never been in Scotland, nor had he done anything to merit the estate. That it should be his because ancestral blood ran in his veins, is beginning to seem not only strange to many, but unjust. And yet I wonder if this basis of inheritance would seem unjust to the reader if he were the inheritor.

Doubtless the time will come when such a distribution of property will seem ridiculous and wicked. But before that time comes new and better methods of inheritance will have to be experienced. Already a few Christians are beginning to see the ridiculousness and folly, not to say the sin, of such things. For example, men pile up hundreds of thousands of dollars, knowing that they must soon die and leave their fortune to others. Those to whom the money is left often have no real need of it, but, on the other hand, are more often cursed than blessed by it, and that in the face of human needs that cry aloud for help. Again, while we talk about the dignity of labour, and the glory of self-made men, we leave money to children in order that they may not need to labour but may be robbed of every vestige of self-made manhood. Future generations will doubtless view the whole proceeding as devoid of reason, and hold it to be both foolish and wicked; but not before more just and equitable methods of inheritance have been wrought through experience, possibly not willingly but by compulsion—

the compulsion of law, or even of revolution.

Only those who do can know. This is the reason it took so many centuries to make the Bible, the reason Christ could come only in the fulness of time, the reason the Lord said to his disciples "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now" (John 16:12), and the reason that Christianity is so long in attaining to the character of Christ.

THE HOPE OF DEMOCRACY

An adequate understanding of Jesus Christ can come only with a democracy that is effective and with a brotherhood that is real. Sociological writers define society as "a number of like-minded individuals, who know and enjoy their like-mindedness, and are therefore able to work together for common ends." *

Were it only true that people were like-minded, and worked together for common ends, it would not take long to understand Christ.

* Giddings, *Elements of Sociology*, p. 6.

Our diverse interests and our selfish antagonisms are precisely what keep us from knowing him. Yet one of the brightest hopes of our century lies in our growing like-mindedness. Nations have fewer antagonisms and more mutual interests than formerly; social classes are neither so far apart nor so antagonistic as heretofore. Between different religions there is now the sympathy of a common aim; between Catholicism and Protestantism there is mutual respect and understanding; while between different Protestant bodies there is hearty co-operation.

HUMAN NEEDS

Another hope of understanding Christ lies in the fact that democracy is recognising more and more the fundamental needs of men, and that with respect to these needs all men are born equal, and have rights which society is bound to recognise and provide for. These needs Professor Giddings enumerates as follows:

1. "The need of material necessities of existence, as food, clothing, and shelter.

2. "The need of satisfaction of the family instincts: the need of affection, of the love of husband and wife, of parent and child. . . .
3. "The need of human sympathy and companionship, especially in suffering. . . .
4. "The need of opportunity for expansion and development of life. . . .
5. "The need of emancipation from fear. . . .

"Accordingly," he says, "the social system that is thought about, perfected, maintained, and administered by those who have the ability to plan and to lead, must be one that meets these fundamental demands of democracy. Any system of laws that endangers material subsistence, that diminishes comfort, that makes the struggle for life an increasingly hard one for the masses, that attacks the essential features of family life, that seems to curtail the opportunity for moral and mental expansion, that weakens the bands of sympathy, or that attacks the social organisation and the knowledge that emancipate men from the curse of fear, will be resisted by the

masses of the people, and ultimately will be overthrown." *

From such a statement it is plain that in a democracy the masses of the people are intent upon the whole round of personal rights and material good with which Jesus was sympathetic, and which follows inevitably both from his spirit and his teachings. The result cannot but be a better understanding of Christ by the people.

RELIGION AND ETHICS

A third hope of understanding Jesus Christ lies in the growing emphasis on the ethics of religion, ethics heretofore seemingly neglected, but ethics that could not find adequate expression except under democratic conditions, where men, standing on the same plane, are free and equal, and where a real brotherhood is possible. At present we find the ethics of Jesus most adequately expressed in the home, where the strong brother is a helper, not an exploiter, and where there is a true social consciousness that shuts no one out.

* Giddings, *op. cit.*, pp. 324 ff.

Both democracy and religion are necessary to extend the ethics of the home into society; for family ethics in society require the recognition of God as Father and of all men as brothers. Indeed, the hope of deeper religious life lies in better ethics. Henry Churchill King rightly says: "The deepening communion with God is only through a constantly deepening moral life. Such a thoroughgoing ethicising of religion as the social consciousness demands, we need not hesitate to believe is possible." *

While to-day we are face to face with a growing neglect of the forms of religion, we are witnessing a growing insistence on the ethics of Jesus in all those relations which democracy brings to the fore—the "square deal," the fair wage, shortened hours of labour, sanitary and safe conditions for the labourer, protection of children, the sacredness of womanhood, provision for sickness and old age, all of which are but the putting of Christ's estimate upon men, because he is a child of God and a brother to every other man. It is evident that from out

* *Theology and the Social Consciousness,* p. 101.

such conditions men will come to fuller understanding and appreciation of Jesus Christ.

CONDITIONS OF ETHICAL EXPRESSION

A fourth hope of understanding Christ lies in the fact that the ethics of Jesus can find their fullest expression only in a democracy. The tyranny and baseness of heathenism drove the early Christians to caves and monasteries; but the ethics of Jesus cannot be adequately lived by men separated from society. Dr. King well says "that we are obviously not intended to come to our best in independence of one another; that we are made on so large a scale that we cannot come to our best alone; that we are evidently made for personal relations, and that, therefore, largeness of life for ourselves depends on our entering into the life of others. . . . Life is the fulfilment of relations. When we try to run away from the variety and complexity of these relations, we are running away from life itself." * It is under democratic conditions that men come into complex

* *Op. cit.*, pp. 14, 15.

and intimate relations, which furnish adequate opportunity for the expression of the ethics of Jesus.

Centuries of persecution drove Christians to "other worldliness"; but other worldliness is not the mood, nor the other world the place to develop practical ethics. Christians could not adequately live Christ's ethics in this world while their highest ambition was to get out of this world into the next.

The history of our own country is well outlined in these words: "When—the most urgent problems of constitutional government have been solved, men turn their attention seriously to the task of improving their material conditions, and give themselves earnestly to industrial affairs. Then is witnessed a marvellous development of invention, of mechanical progress and industrial organisation, and an enormously rapid growth of wealth. Consequent upon this economic progress, there is an astonishing growth of population, which brings with it new and complicated social problems, especially those that grow out of the relations of

employers and employed and the aspirations of the working classes. The final outcome is the development of democracy, and coincident with it a marked development of ethical interest." *

The ethical questions of our day could not have arisen earlier. They have sprung out of the new relations of modern society. The ethical emphasis in religion could not have come sooner. It has been thrust to the fore by the intimate, intricate, and inter-dependent relations of men under democracy. As we live through our new problems, wrestle with them, and suffer over them, we come to a fuller understanding of Christ, for his attitude to them is plain, and his spirit sympathetic.

THE CROSS OF CHRIST

The task of our age, of course, is to incorporate the ethics of Christ in conduct; and in this task the problem is always with the man who is confronted with the cross. It is sometimes said that working men applaud Christ and hiss the church. If so, that applause or

* Giddings, *Elements of Sociology*, p. 302.

hissing may mean much or little. If it is the multitude applauding Christ because he fed them with loaves and fishes, while they seek him only for loaves and fishes, it might as well be a political boss helping them to some job that they applaud. It involves no cross on our part to have another divide with us. Our cross comes when we are required to divide with him. The working man hisses the Christian employer because he refuses to divide. He ought to divide. Profits are unduly high, and wages unfairly low. But it should be remembered that the cross is always on the side of the one who is asked to divide.

The perennial problem of religion is to persuade man to take up his cross. It is easy for one class to point out what another class ought to do. That involves no cross. Every class, therefore, should have a care lest it presume to remove a mote from the eye of another class while a beam is in its own eye. Christ is for every class, for the whole of life, for employer and employee, for fair profits as well as adequate wages. The best way to induce another

to bear his cross is to bear one's own cross. The more Christ-like labour is, the more rapidly will capital become Christian; and the more Christ-like capital is, the more rapidly will labour become Christian. "The social consciousness recognises increasingly—that it really is only demanding, in the concrete, and in detailed application to particular problems, and to all of them, the spirit shown in its fulness only in Christ." *

This spirit can be wrought out into life only as we wrestle with the new problems of our age, and bring them to Christ for testing. And only as we do this can we progressively know him. In him, that is, in his spirit, his purpose, his love, his method, his power to win and subdue men, lies the solution of all social problems; and men can know him only as they experience him in working out the problems involved in transforming society into the "kingdom of God."

* King, *Theology and the Social Consciousness,* pp. 64, 65.

PART II

CHRIST AND THE WORKING MAN

VII

CHRIST'S SYMPATHY WITH THE POOR

ONE difficulty in discussing poverty and wealth lies in the nature of covetousness. Like all appetites, it is stronger in some than in others, and more under the control of reason in some than in others. But ordinarily the covetous man is controlled, not by reason, but by inclination. Wealth is piled up, not for use, but to satisfy an insatiable appetite.

DIFFICULTIES OF THE DISCUSSION

Another difficulty of the subject arises from the fact that most people follow the lines of least resistance. All are aware, for example, that it is better to earn money than to inherit it. By earning what one spends one is not only developed, but he learns the value of money in terms of work, and is thus brought into sympathy with all who toil.

Covetousness is not monopolised by the rich. The spirit of acquisition dominates the western world. It is the ruling passion of our century. Few there are who are not caught in the tide of it; and practically all entertain the delusion that the more they get the happier they will be, notwithstanding the fact that those who have acquired large wealth are aware that happiness does not increase with riches; but, on the other hand, that increase of wealth brings increase of care, trouble, separateness, loneliness, and strife. Such facts, however, retard few of the wealthy and fewer of the poor from the continuous pursuit.

According to the Apostle Paul covetousness is a sin. He places it in the same category with unrighteousness, wickedness, maliciousness, envy, murder, strife, deceit, malignity (Romans 1:29). The difficulty of dealing with covetousness is the difficulty of dealing with all sin. While the judgment may consent that it is sin, the appetite overcomes all leverage on the will, just as it does in case of any bad habit. Indeed, covetousness is so deceptive as almost to

elude the judgment. "Saint Francis Xavier, the noble Jesuit missionary, said that in the confessional men had confessed to him all sins that he knew, and some that he never imagined, but none had ever of his own accord confessed that he was covetous." * We assent to the attitude of Jesus towards poverty, but keep steadily on trying to get as much as we can, vaguely imagining that somehow happiness and well-being lie in acquiring.

CHRIST'S PERSONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Christ himself was poor as men reckon poverty to-day. Joseph was a carpenter, and for a time Jesus doubtless worked at the bench (Mark 6:3). During Christ's ministry followers of means supported him, at least in part (Luke 8:3). His own words, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the heaven have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head" (Matt. 8:19, 20), while possibly holding a reference to heart-loneliness, point to

*Quoted from Rauschenbusch, *Christianity and the Social Crisis*, p. 74.

a life without fixed abode or permanent means of support. When he was asked to pay the half-shekel for the temple tax, there was evidently not so much as a half-shekel in the treasury of the disciples. Peter must be sent to secure the coin from the fish's mouth (Matt. 17:24-27). Judas, the treasurer of the Twelve, being a thief with an eye to the dollar, would not have betrayed Christ for thirty pieces of silver (Matt. 26:15) had there been any prospect of gain from following him. When Christ was crucified, all that he had to bequeath was his mother to John (John 19:27), and his garments to the soldiers. The tomb in which he was buried was a gift from a wealthy disciple (Matt. 27:57). One has fittingly said: "With uncontrolled power to possess all, he owned nothing. He had no place to be born in but another man's stable, no closet to pray in but the wilderness, no place to die but on the cross of an enemy, and no grave but one lent by a friend." * And thus all the circumstances of

* Thomson, *The Land and the Book*, p. 407.

Christ's life brought him into sympathetic relations with the poor.

NEITHER POOR NOR RICH

And yet, strange to say, we do not think of Christ as either poor or rich. The man, Christ Jesus, so overtops all material conditions that they do not obtrude themselves upon our attention. It is always true that the larger looms the man the less we think of his conditions, whether of poverty or riches. Lincoln was poor, but how little we think of his poverty. Washington was rich, but how little we think of his riches. Moreover, Jesus had little consciousness of class. He was at home with rich and poor alike. He taught both with equal frankness. He shielded wrong in none, but laid bare the sins of all. He commanded with an authority that knew no class distinctions, but went straight to the heart of every man. Before him the tinsel dignity of wealth faded away like morning mist. In his presence the poor man stood upright in self-respecting manhood. Yet the poor as a class cannot claim

Christ, for he was rich in the things that make life rich; no more can the rich claim him, for he was poor as the world counts poverty.

RICHES IN RIGHTEOUSNESS

Christ's attitude to both rich and poor was determined, of course, by his ideas of poverty and riches. He came into the world to make life rich; but he would make men rich by making them right. His poor man was the man not rich towards God (Luke 12:21). He neither condemned nor commended poverty or riches as such, but only sin, injustice, and neglect. With Christ the poor man was the man who wronged his brother, who shut his fellow-man out of his heart, and did not enter sympathetically into the lives of others. In a word, the poor man was the unbrotherly man. And just because the poor and weak were wronged by the rich and strong, it is truly said of Christ: "No man ever had a deeper sympathy with the poor and unfortunate. He felt profoundly the misery and injustice which spring from the irresponsible power of wealth, and sought with

all his strength to arouse new feelings of philanthropy." *

There is no sign that Christ desired to make all equally wealthy in this world's goods; but he did desire to make all equally righteous and equally brotherly; and he declared that all were equally responsible and accountable to God (Matt. 25:31-46). Such responsibility and such brotherliness are socially fundamental. They make for social stability and growth, and under them such questions as wages and profits easily and rightly adjust themselves.

CHRIST THE CHAMPION OF THE POOR

So constantly does Christ champion the poor in the New Testament that men at times have regarded poverty a virtue, and, with marked consecration, have lived, not only in poverty and rags, but as beggars,† leaving those less noble than themselves to possess and use the world's wealth for selfish ends. Had they by industry

* Mathews, *The Social Teachings of Jesus,* p. 147.

† See Milman, *History of Latin Christianity,* Vol. VII., p. 360.

acquired wealth to use as stewards of God, their lives would have more fully expressed the teachings of Jesus.

CORRECTING WRONG IDEAS

Some of Christ's teachings about the poor are aimed at wrong Jewish notions. "Among the Jews the poor were heirs at once to a strange and sad contempt, and to a peculiar hope. On the one hand Israel had long had a national tradition of belief that the good were sure to prosper in this life, and the bad would have no prosperity. . . . Yet on the other hand, in strange contrast to this, Israel had from other scriptures another national tradition. It was written that the poor were the special care of Jehovah, who was the god of the friendless and the unfortunate." *

The first tradition appears in such statements as "For such as be blessed of him shall inherit the land, and they that be cursed of him shall be cut off" (Ps. 37:32); while the second tradition, doubtless derived from pity of the poor

* Clarke, *The Ideal of Jesus*, p. 231.

excited by the oppression of their prosperous conquerors,* is reflected in many passages which declare that God has regard for the poor and delivers them out of their afflictions, and from the oppression of the wicked (See Psalms 34: 6; 9: 18; 10: 14).

Jesus combats the idea that either poverty or riches is a sign of God's favour. The blind man, he says, is not blind because of God's disfavour (John 9: 3); and rich men are not necessarily favourites of God, as appears from the parable of Dives and Lazarus (Luke 16: 19 ff.). On the other hand, the "poor in spirit," the "meek," the "merciful," the "mourners," those who "hunger and thirst after righteousness," the "persecuted for righteousness," the "reproached" and "reviled," that is, those who live unselfishly, who grieve over the world's sin and suffering, those who undertake to get righteousness done among men, and take all the kicks and cuffs which the opposition of selfish men, whether rich or poor, brings upon them, are "blessed," for theirs, Christ explains, "is the

* Peabody, *Jesus Christ and the Social Question*, p. 206.

kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:1-12). They are the ones through whom alone the kingdom of God can be established upon earth.

Thus Christ corrects both of the Jewish traditions—that God was favourable to the rich as such, and that God was favourable to the poor as such—and teaches that God's favour is based upon inner qualities which express themselves in outward endeavour.

And yet this teaching of Christ gives the impression of favouring the poor. Indeed, it does favour the poor, since the poor as a class, rather than the rich as a class, are poor in spirit, meek, merciful, unselfish, seekers of righteousness and fair play; and they rather than the rich are reproached, reviled, and persecuted on account of their attitude towards social injustice and oppression, and their demand that every man be treated like a brother. The reforms of history have not come through the rich but through the poor. The persecuted have not been the rich but the poor. Those who have preached righteousness and demanded justice have been the poor. There are exceptions, to

be sure, but vested interests have nearly always opposed the progress of justice towards the weak, and persecuted those who advocated it.

SYMPATHETIC WITH ALL SUFFERING

Another fact which brought Christ close to the poor was his sympathy with all suffering. The greatest suffering is always found among the poor. So compassionate was Christ that he could not pass the poor widow of Nain, as she followed her only son to burial, without restoring the boy to his mother (Luke 7 : 11 ff.); he could not see the crowd pushing aside the helpless cripple at the pool of Bethesda without saying to him, "Wouldst thou be made whole? . . . Arise, take up thy bed, and walk" (John 5 : 6 ff.); he could not hear the poor blind beggar at Jericho cry, "Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me," without stopping the whole company and commanding that he be brought for healing (Luke 18 : 35 ff.); he could not contemplate the leper, who was poor, lonely, and shut out from his fellows, without saying, "I will, be thou clean" (Mark 1 : 40 ff.). And

yet, in such ministry Christ never discriminates against the rich. The multitude which he fed was made up of all classes. It was physical hunger that elicited his compassion (Mark 8:2). The centurion, whose servant Christ healed, was a man of wealth (Luke 7:1 ff.) and the home of Mary and Martha, whose brother, Lazarus, Christ raised from the dead, was evidently a home of means (John 11:1 ff.). It was not poverty or riches as such that moved Christ to sympathy, compassion, and helpfulness, but human need. He bade the rich, when they made a feast, invite, not those whose lives were filled with feasting, but the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind, not the full but the hungry, not the sated but the needy. It was the needs of men that appealed to Christ. Want, misery, and suffering stirred his soul and he denounced unsparingly those who inflicted them.

If one turn from the theology which he inherited—which was good for its day—and read again the synoptic gospels in the light of the social teachings of our time he will be amazed

at the largeness of the social ministry of Christ, and at Christ's passion to relieve the want, suffering, and loneliness of men, and at his confidence that if these ministries were performed in the name of the Father and for the love of man, men would soon find, honour, and obey God.

INDIGNANT AT ALL WRONG

Another fact which called forth Christ's sympathy for the poor was his indignation at all wrong. The poor are the ones most frequently wronged. Christ lashed the money changers out of the temple courts because they were fleecing the people (John 2:15 ff.); and he gave the well-kept scribes and Pharisees a memorable tongue-lashing because they devoured widows' houses (Mark 12:40). In his parable he condemns without stint the servant who refuses the poor man under him time to pay what he owes (Matt. 18:32 ff.). He puts Dives in hell because he turns hungry Lazarus from his door (Luke 16:19 ff.). To such an extent does Christ champion the wronged that

he teaches that God will not have compassion on those who have no compassion on the weak (Matt. 18:32-35); that God will not forgive us unless we forgive those who sin against us (Matt. 6:15); and that the duty of every man is to help bear the burdens of his weaker brother (Gal. 6:2; John 13:15). Christ's whole ministry is a condemnation of the strong who wrong the weak. His heart is ever with the wronged. The nature of his ministry is expressed in the words which he himself quoted at its very beginning: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor; he hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord" (Luke 4:18 ff.). And when Christ would give John the Baptist the signs of his ministry he said to John's disciples: "Go your way and tell John what things ye have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good tidings preached

to them" (Luke 7:22). Thus Christ identifies himself with the suffering and the wronged. He would remedy the conditions which produce suffering, and he condemns those who are guilty of wronging their fellows. The man who is wronged, whatever the wrong, has Christ on his side. The man who does wrong, whatever the wrong, has Christ against him. Christ is the champion, not of rich or poor as such, but of the wronged. Men bemean themselves by thinking of themselves in terms of rich or poor. It is manhood that counts. Honest poverty is a king's crown, while dishonest wealth is a slave's badge.

Too long has Christ's ministry been regarded as purely spiritual. It is no more spiritual than physical. Christ does not separate between physical and spiritual. He deals with man as a unit. He could no more turn from a man physically hungry than from a man spiritually hungry; no more withhold compassion from a man burdened with disease than from a man burdened with sin. He well knew that all conditions of life were shuttles weaving the fabric

of the soul. Too long have Christ's miracles of feeding and healing been regarded as evidences of his divine Sonship—precisely what Christ refused to make them when he refused to work miracles as signs. They are rather the expression of Christ's mind for society—that the hungry should be fed, the diseased cured, the lame made to walk, and crushing burdens lifted from the backs of the weak. Christ said that his followers would do, not only the works that he did, but greater works (John 14:12). Where he raised one from the dead, Christianised society was to prevent the death of many; where he healed a few, Christian society was to develop conditions which would eradicate disease; where he fed paltry thousands, Christians were to organise society so that all would be fed.

Do Christians conduct business so as to produce disease, impose hunger, entail hardship, and bind heavy burdens upon body and soul? Let them know that were their Lord here he would go about striving to undo the very things which they are doing, and the profits for which

they do these things he would despise and condemn. No part of Christ's ministry has greater social significance than his miracles of mercy and helpfulness.

WELCOMES THE MOST RECEPTIVE

Still another fact which brings Christ into sympathetic touch with the poor is his joy in those who are most receptive of his teaching. The common people heard him gladly (Mark 12:37). While a few of the rich were numbered among Christ's followers, like Nicodemus, Zacchæus, and Joseph of Arimathea, and while there were also a few from the dregs of society, the woman at the well of Sychar, and the woman who washed his feet with her tears in the house of Simon, he chose his twelve disciples from those who were neither rich nor poor, but simply well-to-do, and the larger circle of his disciples came from the same class. The middle class is ever most receptive of the good, most open to righteousness and justice, most responsive to truth, and readiest for fair play.

CHRISTIANITY BUILDS UP THE MIDDLE CLASS

Not only has the middle class always been most receptive of Christ, but Christianity adds to the middle class. It is the most effective force in the world for building democracy. In Christ's day there were many beggars in Palestine, and alms-giving was not only held to be a religious duty, but a virtue of great merit, indicating exceptional righteousness in the giver. When the Pharisees gave alms it was with much parade, that they might have glory of men (Matt. 6:2). When Zacchæus welcomed Christ to his house he said: "Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor" (Luke 19:8). Though Christ occasionally commanded alms-giving (Luke 12:33, 18:28; Matt. 5:52; Luke 6:30), he taught that it should be done as secretly and unostentatiously as possible (Matt. 6:3, 4). Only the slightest hints appear that either Christ or his disciples gave alms, as, for example, the protest of Judas that the spikenard with which Mary anointed Jesus might have been sold and given to the poor

(John 12:5), and the conjecture of the disciples at the last supper that, because Judas had the bag, Christ bade him go out and give something to the poor (John 13:29).

One only needs to visit oriental countries to-day to realise what a source of degradation alms-giving has been. There are cities where beggars meet you on every street corner. If you give to one you are immediately surrounded by many. Mere babies are taught to beg. And the more the alms given the more sodden the people become. The habit of "tipping," practised all over Europe to-day, and gradually infesting our own country, is a process of pauperising the souls of the recipients, to say nothing of the deliberate commercial exploitation of the practice by employers.

It is significant that Jesus was known as the "healer" when one considers that about three-fourths of all charity to-day is made necessary by physical disability.* Jesus always lifted the man who needed alms into a place where he should no longer need alms, but should be able

* See Devine, *Misery and its Causes*, p. 54.

to help himself. When he opened the eyes of the blind man at Jericho, the man did not go back to his begging, but followed Jesus, glorifying God (Luke 18:43). He became such a man as was not willing to sit and beg. "Is this not he who sat and begged?" the neighbours inquired about the man whom Christ healed at the pool of Siloam (John 9:8), but the man's begging days were over. When eyes were opened, the leprous healed, and the palsied restored, there was no longer need of alms. Men were lifted into a condition where they could help themselves.

He greatly misunderstands, however, who thinks that sightless eyes, leprous bodies, and palsied limbs made greater appeal to Christ than sightless souls, leprous hearts, and palsied manhood (See Matt. 5:29, 30). Christ would lift men out of whatever conditions interfere with noblest manhood, whether conditions of extreme poverty or extreme wealth; for the great moral resources of any people are, not in rich or poor, but in manhood.

MAN UPPERMOST

It would be interesting to know what position Christ would take on many of our social questions, were he here to-day. The probabilities are that he would deal, not with wages, hours of labour, methods of relief, tenements, sweat-shops, and a score of other questions, but with basal facts of life and fundamental conditions of living. Christ's day was filled with concrete social questions, even as is our own. In the face of them all he dealt with the fundamentals of manhood, for manhood is the principal factor in determining the life-conditions, both of one's self and others. The rich landlord maintains tuberculous tenements because he lacks manhood. And yet, if his wealth were distributed among those who live in his tenements it might mean for them simply idleness, or dissipation, and for the same reason, that they also lack manhood. Through lack of manhood the employer may work his men too many hours a day; but through lack of manhood in the employee also fewer hours at work may mean

more hours in the saloon. Jesus always went deeper than the immediate physical need. This need he recognised, with it he sympathised, and when he could he remedied it; but physical and social conditions he ever regarded as the results of something deeper in man. To the palsied man borne of four he said, "Son, thy sins are forgiven" (Mark 2:5). To the man healed at the pool of Bethesda he said, "Sin no more lest a worse thing befall thee" (John 5:14). According to Christ, not more money but more man was the need, both of rich and poor. And to-day more manhood is the solution of our problems and the remedy for our ills. More manhood in the rich means higher wages, shorter hours of labour, less exorbitant profits, and more sanitary tenements. And more manhood in the poor means less beer, less whiskey, less tobacco, less impurity, less disease; more self-control, more thrift, and higher ideals.

There is no question of Christ's sympathy with the poor and his championship of their interests, because of the wrongs they endure, because of the sufferings they bear, because of

their greater receptiveness of his teachings; but those who hope in Christ for social betterment on any other basis than that of redeemed manhood in rich and poor alike, hope in vain. On the other hand, those who hope in Christ and work with Christ on the basis of a redeemed manhood, and to secure it, shall some day see their toil and sacrifice rewarded; for, though with seeming slowness, and with many eddies in the current, the stream of social progress is flowing Jesus' way.

VIII

CHRIST'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE RICH

THERE are two embarrassments in studying Christ's attitude to wealth: (1) the abundance of materials, and (2) the use made by so many commentators, social teachers, and historians of only a part of Christ's teachings.

TWO SETS OF TEACHINGS

Most authors recognise two sets of teachings, or at least two degrees of emphasis, in the New Testament on the subject of riches.*

In one set of teachings the Christian is to renounce wealth altogether. "So therefore," Christ says, "whosoever he be of you that renounceth not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:33). To the rich young ruler, Jesus said: "One thing thou lack-

* See Mathews, *The Social Teachings of Jesus*, p. 142; Clarke, *The Ideal of Jesus*, pp. 193 ff.; Rauschenbusch, *Christianity and the Social Crisis*, p. 80.

est yet. Sell all that thou hast and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come, follow me" (Luke 18:22). James and John left everything and followed Christ (Luke 5:11).

In the other set of teachings the Christian is to use his wealth as a steward of God. The servants in the parables of the talents (Matt. 25:14-30) and of the pounds (Luke 19:13-27) are to employ their master's money for the master's profit. The foolish rich man with bursting cribs (Luke 12:16-21) is condemned because he kept piling up wealth and did not use it. The unjust steward, on the other hand, is commended for shrewdness in using his master's wealth even though he used it unjustly (Luke 16:1-13). Christ commends, not his dishonesty, but his resourcefulness in using what was under his hands. How much more, is Christ's argument, should the sons of God use what is under their hands.

THE MIND OF CHRIST

It is evident, therefore, that Christ's attitude to wealth can be ascertained only by considering all of his teachings. Luke is much more sympathetic with the poor than either Matthew or Mark, just as James is more sympathetic than Paul. And only as we consider Christ's attitude to wealth as viewed by both his more and less sympathetic interpreters, shall we be able to understand him.

INCIDENTS AND PARABLES

In the study of Christ's attitude to wealth it is important to distinguish between incidents and parables. Parables set forth principles. For this they are spoken, and the speaker shapes his own vehicle of thought. Incidents, on the contrary, have specific and local colouring which modifies their teaching. For example, Jesus bade the rich young ruler sell all that he had and give to the poor. This indicates that in the young man himself, or in his conditions or relations, there was something which made it

necessary for him to dispose of his wealth in order to follow Christ. From this incident one may not conclude that all who would follow Christ must reduce themselves to poverty. Indeed, Christ had a number of rich followers (See Luke 19:8; Matt. 27:57). Again, in answer to the surprise of his disciples when he taught that one must leave all to follow him, Christ said: "There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or mother, or father, or children, or lands for my sake, and for the gospel's sake, but he shall receive a hundred fold *now in this time,* houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come, eternal life" (Mark 10:29, 30). This indicates that while it may be necessary to abandon houses and lands for Christ's sake, property is not inconsistent with discipleship. There were good and specific reasons why James and John should leave their father and their fishing nets to follow Christ; but Zacchæus proposed to give only half of his goods to the poor, and Christ said to him: "To-day is salvation

come to this house" (Luke 19:8, 9). Susanna was a wealthy woman, and ministered to Christ of her substance (Luke 8:3).

NO FIXED RULE

There is not found in the teachings of Jesus any fixed rule as to whether his disciples should be rich or poor. There are found, as we shall see, very positive teachings as to the use one should make of his possessions, be they many or few.

It is just as true now as when Christ spoke to the rich young ruler, that if one's wealth has become his master, and the first object of his affections, he should get rid of it. It is just as true now as when Jesus bade James and John leave their fishing nets, that if one's work obstructs his obedience to God he should leave it. "If thy right eye causeth thee to stumble," Christ said, "pluck it out. . . . If thy right hand causeth thee to stumble, cut it off" (Matt. 5:29, 30).

The difficulty of understanding Christ at this point is the difficulty of following him at this

point. Wealth has been given such a large and important place in modern life that men feel that they must obtain and hold wealth at all hazards, even though manhood should perish. The fortune, men think, must not be given away or spent, even though the soul should sink into hell. The attitude of Jesus was precisely the opposite. He puts first a right and useful life. If wealth interferes with such a life, he no more hesitates to command one to put away wealth than to put away anything else. To Christ a million dollars is no more than one dollar if it injures a man's soul or interferes with his highest usefulness. Our interpretations of Christ, to be true, must be filled with the heroism of Christ. We do not hesitate to say to young men who are keeping evil company, "Abandon evil companions, they injure you." To our friends we say, "Stop going to evil places, they degrade you"; or, "Discontinue bad habits, they poison and pollute you." But when we come to wealth, the greatest rival of God in men's affections, we are tempted to keep hands off, or to tone down or explain

away the teachings of Christ, and to go on destroying ourselves and wronging society by yielding to our money-passion. Jesus, on the contrary, never wavered when he came to wealth, but bade men put it away when it interfered with loyalty to God or service to man, just as he bade men put away anything else that interfered with spiritual life and noblest manhood.

THE RIGHT TO POSSESS WEALTH

Some point to the common purse of Christ's disciples (John 12:19, 13:6) as an argument for communism. But they fail to give due weight to the fact that Christ had many other disciples who did not share this common purse, but retained their possessions (Matt. 27:57), and maintained their own households (Matt. 14:3).

When Christ first sent out his disciples to preach he bade them go empty-handed (Luke 10:4); but later he bade them take both purse and sword (Luke 22:36).

The community of goods in the early church

(Acts 2:44, 45; 4:32, 37) is cited by socialistic interpreters as a protest against capitalism; * but this spasm of communism was due to no requirement of Christ. Its voluntary character is specifically pointed out by Peter when he says to Ananias, who sought to deceive him regarding the sale of his farm: "Whiles it remained, did it not remain thine own? and after it was sold was it not in thy power" (Acts 5:4)? This communism seems due to a number of temporary causes: to the ecstatic joy at Christ's resurrection; to the mistaken idea that Christ was soon to come again, so that houses and lands would not be needed; to the overflowing good will towards all men which came with the first glow of the conversion experience and the remarkable triumph of the hour; to the presence of so many poor in Jerusalem and the lack of any better method than simple distribution; and to the impossibility of understanding at that time the nature of Christianity, which was gradually, through long cen-

* See Peabody, *Jesus Christ and the Social Question*, p. 26, note.

turies, not only to renew individuals, but to organise society, industry, and government according to the mind of Christ.

The little communistic scheme utterly broke down and disappeared as others have since done, and it left the church at Jerusalem pauperised and dependent (Acts 11 : 29, 30). To point to it as Christ's idea of a Christian society is wholly absurd.

I do not mean to say that communism, or socialism, or any other ism is not a proper social scheme. Time will tell. One would be both bold and blind to say that the present wage system, with its competitions, fighting combinations, antagonisms, numerous abuses, and unjust oppression, is the highest expression to which social and commercial life can come. Such a thought would cast reflection upon both man's brain and heart. I do mean to say that Jesus Christ proposed no specific social scheme. He condemned no man because he was rich. He bade no one divest himself of property simply because he had it. At no time is Christ antagonistic to wealth simply as such.

DANGERS OF WEALTH

Jesus was careful to point out the dangers of wealth.* The wealth of the rich young ruler held first place in his heart, and when he was required to choose between Christ and his wealth he chose wealth (Luke 18:23). Here lies the greatest danger of wealth, that it occupy first place in one's heart. And Christ will not take second place, nor will he share the heart with any love that is inconsistent with love to him. This he clearly states when he says, "Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Luke 16:13). Mammon must be held and used conformably to the mind of Christ.

A second danger of wealth is its deceitfulness. As thorns in a field choke out the good seed, so, Christ says, the deceitfulness of riches choke out the better elements of life (Matt. 13:22). The rich fool with bursting cribs (Luke 12:16 ff.) was deceived. He did not realise what a fool he was until he discovered that he had been working all his life to enjoy something

* See Speer, *Principles of Jesus*, pp. 96 ff.

that he never could enjoy. Dives was deceived (Luke 16: 19 ff.). He did not realise how selfish he had been until he woke up in hell, and then he wanted to send some one back to warn his brethren not to do as he had done. These parables are spoken by Christ, not harshly, but in sympathy for the blindness of men.

A third danger of wealth is the hardening effect which comes with accumulation, if both life and wealth are not consecrated to God. What a cold, hard, merciless picture is that which Christ draws of Dives, clothed in purple and fine linen and feasting sumptuously every day, while without pity for the hungry Lazarus at his door! Christ pictures the dogs more merciful than the man, since they come and lick the beggar's sores (Luke 16: 19 ff.).

Note the merciless conduct which Christ portrays in the avaricious steward who refused forgiveness to his underservant, and instead, cast him into prison until he should pay the last penny (Matt. 18: 29, 30 ff.). Christ teaches very clearly, and experience even more clearly, that when the passion for money grips the heart,

a man is in danger of growing hard towards his fellows.

A fourth danger of wealth is a restive desire for what does not profit. Christ says that "a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth" (Luke 12:15). One can eat only about so much food, and wear only about so many clothes. The difference in men's wealth is not so much in what they actually use as in what they pile up to no purpose. If a man's life consisted in his possessions there would be good reasons for piling up wealth, since the more wealth the more life. But it is not so, and a danger of wealth is that it fill a man with eagerness to spend his life in ways that profit no one, working and striving to no purpose.

A fifth danger of wealth is its tendency to lead one to centre his life on things rather than on people—on farms rather than on the men who work farms; on stores rather than on those who run them; on the manufacturing plant rather than on those who operate the machines; on profits rather than on parents and

children who make profits possible; on dividends rather than on those who earn dividends.

Christ says that we are to lay up treasures, not on earth in such form that moths and rust can consume them, but in heaven in such form that moths and rust cannot get at them (Matt. 6:19-21). There is just one way to lay up treasure in heaven, and that is by laying it up in the lives of men here. The more exclusively a man gives himself to piling up things, the poorer he grows in his soul, and the farther he becomes separated from his fellows. On the other hand, the more he gives himself to blessing and helping his fellows, the richer he becomes in himself and in all his relations with others. Would you have treasure in heaven? "Make to yourselves friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness" (Luke 16:9). It is friends that make one rich. Would you have treasure in heaven? "If, therefore, ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches" (Luke 16:11)? Christ pictures as having treasure in heaven those who ministered

to him by ministering to men when hungry, naked, in prison, or in any need" (Matt. 25:31 ff.).

These dangers of wealth Christ clearly indicates: the danger that wealth occupy first place in the heart; the danger that wealth deceive one as to life's highest enjoyment and real mission; the danger that it harden one's heart towards one's fellows; the danger of a restive desire to spend the life for what does not profit; and the danger of centring the life on things rather than on people.

ILL-GOTTEN GAIN CONDEMNED

Nowhere does Christ condemn wealth or the possessors of wealth as such. He does condemn the wrong acquisition of wealth. The prophets before Christ hurled their anathemas at wealth unjustly acquired. "The spoil of the poor is in your houses," says Isaiah. "What mean ye that ye crush my people and grind the face of the poor? saith the Lord of hosts" (Isa. 3:14, 15). And Amos cries: "Hear this, O ye that would swallow up the

needy, and cause the poor of the land to fail,—making the ephah small and the shekel great, and dealing falsely with balances of deceit. . . . The Lord hath sworn by the excellency of Jacob, surely I will never forget any of their works" (Amos 8:4 ff.).

Christ puts the same teaching into a parable: A husbandman planted a vineyard, set a hedge about it, built a winepress, let it out to servants, and went into another country. At the time of harvest he sent an agent to receive the fruit of his vineyard, but they beat him and sent him away empty; a second agent was sent, but him they stoned; many others were sent, but some were stoned and some killed. Finally the husbandman sent his son, saying, "They will reverence my son." But they said, "This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours" (Mark 12:1-9).

This is pre-eminently a social parable, and its meaning is plain. This world is God's vineyard, and he has let it out to men, who are his servants. But men, ignoring the claims and rights of God, are engaged in a desperate

struggle to possess it for themselves. God sent prophet after prophet, who strove to get men to recognise the fact that "the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof" (Ps. 21:1), and who denounced them for their inhumanity to their fellows as they strove unjustly to possess themselves of the fruits of the earth. But some prophets they stoned, others they killed. Then God sent Jesus Christ his Son, to make plain to man whose world this was, how it should be used by those to whom it is entrusted, and how man should treat his brother man. But the Son they crucified.

No teaching could be plainer. The man who acquires wealth by ignoring God, by setting aside the teachings of Jesus, and by refusing to practise the principles of Christ in his methods, is the man that Christ is picturing and denouncing in this parable. His direct condemnation falls upon those who acquire wealth by "devouring widows' houses" (Mark 12:40); and this phrase is such as to include and place his condemnation upon all ill-gotten gain.

NON-USE OF WEALTH CONDEMNED

Christ's condemnation also falls upon the non-use of wealth. There is no intimation that the rich fool with bursting cribs did not acquire his wealth honestly. Being a farmer, he simply took what his land produced. Christ condemns him because he does not use his wealth, but simply piles it up (Luke 12:16-21).

The servants who hid, the one his talent in the earth (Matt. 25:18), and the other his pound in a napkin (Luke 19:20), received their money as honestly as the others, and from the same source. The parables are spoken for the very purpose of condemning those who do not use for God the things of which they are possessed. Christ's great judgment parable (Matt. 25:31 ff.) is spoken for the purpose of condemning those who stand before the world's needs, able to help, but not helping. And the parable doubles the emphasis on ministry to men by declaring that those who minister to the least of men minister to Christ.

SELFISH USE OF WEALTH CONDEMNED

Then, too, Christ condemns with startling severity the selfish use of wealth. In the parable of Dives and Lazarus (Luke 16: 19 ff.) Christ pictures Dives as a man given up to self-gratification. He is not, like the rich fool, anxious to pile up more money. He has enough. Nor is he, like the rich fool, deceived by thinking that after a while he will enjoy himself. He is enjoying himself now. And he came by his wealth honestly, possibly by inheritance. Indeed, everything is all right and proper about his wealth except that he has no thought or concern but to spend it on himself. It takes Christ only five verses to draw the picture and put this man in hell. And there is no need that another word be said.

WEALTH A TRUST FROM GOD

It has been customary to spiritualise Christ's parables, and almost lift them out of their application to commercial life. Such interpretation might serve a purpose when men looked

for Christ's kingdom to be realised in heaven, and not on earth. But our day expects Christ's kingdom to be realised in social conditions in this world. It believes that this was Christ's expectation, and that he spoke his parables, not to have the point taken out of them by spiritualising them, but to be taken as he spoke them. Christ was crucified, not for spiritual theories, nor for his declarations about a world to come, but because he laid open, as with a surgeon's lance, the cancerous sins of men in their relations to God and to their fellows. The supreme task of Christians is to correct the evils which, when assailed by Christ, made men angry and led them to crucify him, evils which, though changing in form with the centuries, in principle are ever the same.

One of the most glaring of these evils was and is the wrong conception and use of wealth. Jesus teaches that every man is a steward of God, that all his possessions are a trust from God, and that he will answer to God for the use he makes of them. This teaching is perfectly clear in the parables of the Wicked Hus-

bandman, the Talents, the Pounds, and the Last Judgment, already referred to.

In the past twenty-five years the truth that every Christian is a steward of God, has become a commonplace of religious thought; but as yet it is far from being a commonplace of religious conviction and practice. The conviction, however, is deepening, and the practice is increasing. Men are refusing longer to maintain the old distinctions between sacred and secular. All of life is sacred, and all conduct that is right is sacred. The home is as sacred as the pulpit, the store as the place of prayer, the shop as the altar, the farm as the cathedral. Getting money is as sacred as giving money, and helping men as sacred as worshipping God.

Men are realising now as they have not realised heretofore that since nine-tenths of human life has to do with the earning and spending of money, to exclude the teachings of Christ from money-making and money-spending is to bar him effectively from ever setting up his kingdom on this earth; and that to sing Christ's

praises in church while denying his authority in business, which absorbs nine-tenths of human activity, is to offer the world a religion that does not commend itself to human intelligence.

THE KINGDOM FIRST

Christ's command to every Christian is: "Seek ye first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things (necessary material things) shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33). Money must be earned, held, and spent so as to express the mind of Christ in the social order. This means that money must be earned and used so as to make for friendship, brotherliness, righteousness, and the honour and exaltation of Jesus Christ in the hearts of men. The strong in the financial world are to "bear the burdens of the weak" by having an eye to their interests and protecting them against wrong. "The spirit of Jesus certainly has nothing but condemnation for that great wave of money-love which has swept over Christendom in our time, affecting all classes of people. It has fostered self-indulgence,

brightened the charm of luxury, added to the zest of fashion, reinforced the impulse to gambling, stimulated depraved appetites, corrupted business and politics, brought in new varieties of crime, oppressed the poor, deepened the bondage of excessive labour, increased the alienation of social classes, materialised the popular ideals, weakened religious influences, and made heavenly things seem far away. From this craze of the love of money the voice of Jesus calls men back to the sane life in ethics and religion in which he is leader." *

PROFIT-SHARING

Already many encouraging signs are appearing in the business world. The *Review of Reviews* for April, 1912, contained the following significant note:

"Last month Alexander Smith & Sons, a carpet company in Yonkers, New York—one of those quiet concerns that rarely furnish material for the chronicler of financial news—sent checks for $65,000 to employees.

* Clarke, *The Ideal of Jesus,* p. 258.

"The treasurer announced the event as the company's second semi-annual distribution of profits. He explained that workers of ten years standing were receiving amounts equal to ten per cent of their earnings for the six months ending December 31st, last; and that those of more than five years standing, but less than ten, were receiving amounts equal to five per cent of their earnings. In all twenty-five hundred persons participated.

"Profit-sharing has generally been looked upon as something to which a corporation's bigness was a condition precedent—something which might be practised only by concerns equal in stature to the United States Steel Corporation, the International Harvester Company, or the Eastman Kodak Company. The last-named figured conspicuously in last month's news, through its announcement of a plan to divide among its employees, all over the world, surplus earnings amounting to a half-million dollars.

"On March 12th the great Prudential Life Insurance Company gave out the news that it

had inaugurated a pension system for its five thousand employees. Retiring, a man or woman gets one per cent of the average earnings over ten years, multiplied by the number of years of service.

"It is generally assumed that such splendid acts of justice cannot be performed by smaller concerns. Various captains of industry, in testifying before the Senate Committee on Interstate Commerce, have suggested that such systems were possible only for the great widely owned 'trusts.'

"In opposition, Louis D. Brandeis declared before the same body: 'Wise business men are seeing that, if they want to get the best they can out of the men, the men must work for themselves. It must be their business, and they must get all the fruit of what is earned over a fair return on capital. Instead of profit-sharing being possible only for capitalistic institutions, we (in Massachusetts) have found by far the finest and best fruits of the system in small concerns; some of them family concerns, or concerns with a small number of partners, or stock-

holders, who were expanding and developing their business.'

"Mr. Brandeis instanced one comparatively small manufacturing concern—the Denison Manufacturing Company—which, after paying a liberal return on its capital, distributes each year to its employees, in proportion to their salaries, every cent of the remaining surplus. Another example was a grocery concern which pays six per cent on its capital. It gives the remaining profits, one-half to its executive officers, and one-half to its working force, in addition to their salaries and wages.

"In England profit-sharing has long been successfully practised in many of the staple trades, as 'a substitute for the old personal bond between employer and employed.' Over there they look upon the system as one practical means by which the small manufacturer and the small shopkeeper can perpetuate their business and compete on equal ground with their bigger brothers."

IX

CHRIST'S SOCIAL IDEAL

LIFE is controlled by certain fundamental laws, such as those governing birth, growth, health, and death. If society is an organism, as some maintain, it is reasonable to expect that there are laws by which it is to be organised, maintained in healthy condition, and brought to ultimate perfection.

THE FAMILY

Such laws we naturally look for in the family. The mating instinct is fundamental to the propagation and preservation of the race. The family is the social unit in which social impulses first find expression; and love of husband, wife, and offspring is its organising force.

The individual is made rich by relationships, by husband or wife, by children and friends, in a word, by loving and being loved. Life can come to its best only in relationships.

It is not surprising, therefore, that Jesus viewed the race as a family, in which all are children of God, and brothers one of another. In this, as in all else, Jesus deals with fundamentals.

FATHER AND BROTHER

Christ expresses his social ideal by the terms "Father" and "brother." First of all, God is Christ's Father, and Christ is God's Son. This fact Christ indicates in numerous ways: He must be about his Father's business (Luke 2:46). He receives his commandments from the Father (John 10:18). He that loves him shall be loved of his Father (John 14:21). All things are delivered to him of his Father (Matt. 11:27).

In many ways also Christ indicates that men are his brothers: Whoever does the will of God is his brother, sister, mother (Mark 3:35). "Inasmuch," he says, "as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matt. 25:40). This brotherly relation is also set forth in such teach-

ings as that Christ came to call, not the righteous, but sinners to repentance; to heal, not the well, but the sick (Matt. 9:12, 13), and to serve all.

Christ makes equally clear the fact that God is the father of all men, and that all men are brothers. He bids us pray, "Our Father who art in heaven" (Matt. 6:9). He says, "I ascend unto my Father and your Father, unto my God and your God" (John 20:17).

Christ does not argue the question of human brotherhood any more than that of the divine fatherhood. He assumes both relations. "Brother" is his common term when speaking of men. He says that one may not worship at God's altar unless he first makes right the wrong done to his brother (Matt. 5:23, 24). Again, "If thy brother sin against thee, go show him his fault between thee and him alone" (Matt. 18:15). "If thy brother sin, rebuke him; if he repent, forgive him" (Luke 17:3). "One is your master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren" (Matt. 28:8).

But the brotherhood relation does not de-

pend upon the use of the term. All Christ's teachings about the love of enemies, returning good for evil, and ministering to the needy, have the same import. To Jesus the whole human race is one great family, though some are away from the Father's house. He recognises no distinctions of nationality, colour, condition, or circumstance. God is Father of all, and all men are brothers. To Christ "there was no privilege of birth; men did not become members of the kingdom by descent from Abraham, but by a transformation of character, a new birth of the spirit. There was no privilege of wealth and social position: all members of the kingdom became brothers, with equal rights and equal duties. There was no privilege of priesthood: every man could go direct in prayer to his Father, and worship God in spirit. There was no privilege of learning: the Pharisees who knew the law were no better than the *am-ha-arets* whom they despised, possibly not so good as he." *

* Vedder, *Socialism and the Ethics of Jesus*, p. 348.

THE BASIS OF SOCIAL TEACHING

All Christ's social teachings proceed from this fundamental fact, that humanity is a family. His endeavour is to bring all to recognise God as their Father, and fellow-men as brothers. He thus begins at the very foundation of all social problems, and deals with them in their basic elements. Not a few writers have called attention to this fact.

Shailer Mathews says: "Jesus' ideal for humanity is that of a divine family, and in so far as any thing or custom renders a realisation of that ideal more difficult, in the same proportion is that thing to be sacrificed. . . . His question is always, not 'Is this thing good in itself?' but 'Does it make towards the realisation of the divine brotherhood?'" *

Professor George Albert Coe says: "What seems to be the central purpose with which Jesus has inspired us of this generation is to work together with him in carrying out the design of the Father to establish a universal

* *The Social Teachings of Jesus,* pp. 143, 144.

divine-human society animated by righteous love analogous to that which prevails in our ideal family. For short, let us say that the end of Christian conduct is the family of God, with all its diversity of persons, all the variety of satisfactions that make up a life of rational values, all its changing circumstances in this life and in that which is to come." *

Dr. W. N. Clarke writes with admirable comprehensiveness to the same effect: "Jesus contemplates a state of things in which men shall be inwardly good with a real goodness, and shall be gladly devoted to doing the will of their heavenly Father. In this sincere and genuine loyalty to God he expects them to conduct the life that they live together as men. All are to bring what they learn from God into their relations with one another. Each is to love his neighbour as himself. All are to act out the Christ-like spirit of self-sacrificing helpfulness. Their life together is to be governed by justice, of which the golden rule is the working law. The arrangements of social

* *American Journal of Theology*, Vol. XIV., No. 2, p. 261.

life are to do justice to the high value of human beings. No man is to be or claim to be master over another's soul, and every conscience is to be answerable to God. Under these vital laws of love, justice, helpfulness, and human value, all life is to be organised and to proceed. In this spirit must be conducted the entire administration of property, gain, wealth, and the relation of the rich and the poor. These are the main points that we have heard Jesus expound and illustrate, but we see at once that these are only samples of the whole life. Classes and nations are to live together on the same principles. No part of the life that men live together is to be exempt from the sway of these simple, righteous, and gracious laws, and men must learn to organise or reconstruct the society in which they live in such manner that these principles may have their way." *

Henry C. Vedder states the matter concisely when he says: "That God is our Father, that this is God's world, that we are all sons of God, bound by the tie of brotherhood into

* *The Ideal of Jesus*, pp. 301, 302.

one great family—these are the corner-stones on which all the social teachings of Jesus rest. . . . His social ideal may be summed up by saying that his aim was to make all men brothers, by making them consciously sons of God; and that his firm conviction was that only by brotherly love, thus implanted and sustained in human hearts, can the problems of society be solved." *

Paul gathers Christ's social ideal into an exceedingly compact and significant illustration when he declares that redeemed society is like the human body, in which each member, whether big or little, is part of the whole, and necessary to the whole; that an injury to one member is an injury to all members, and makes all suffer; that help to one is help to all, and confers blessings on all (See I Corinthians 12: 13-27).

IN PROCESS OF REALISATION

Christ's conception of society as one family, though far from realised, is nevertheless in

* *Op. cit.*, p. 371.

process of realisation, and considerable progress has already been made. Rapid communication and transit have given entrance to every country, so that now we pass rapidly from one to another, and feel reasonably at home in all. Nation is more dependent on nation than formerly, and through the channels of commerce we are busy feeding and clothing each other; while within each nation the specialisation of industry and the division of labour make each dependent upon all and all upon each as never before in the world's history. For example, a strike of coal miners or railroad engineers affects every household in the United States. Careless sanitation in China endangers the health of the whole world. The wages paid in Europe influence the wages of every labourer in America. Unless the standard of living in the Orient be raised it is only a matter of time when the standard of living in the Occident will be lowered. The population of the United States is an amalgam of scores of nationalities; and this fact draws the United States close to the fatherlands of all her adopted sons and also draws

those fatherlands closer to each other. Christianity is a bond of union between all Christian nations. And at the present time the East, especially China—comprising one-fourth of the world's population—is inviting closer relations with the West by sending to us for teachers, physicians, engineers, and leaders in every department of life. The Red Cross Society is welcomed everywhere, and honoured among all nations for its ministries of mercy; while the doors of every land are wide open to the messengers of Jesus Christ. The family feeling has pervaded the race like leaven. Slavery is abolished; duelling has ceased; the horrors of war are mitigated; torture is forbidden; the poor are educated; and scores and hundreds of other brotherly things are done daily.

METHOD OF PROGRESS

The world is progressing, however, precisely as Christ said it would progress. For all the meal to be leavened requires time; and the mustard seed does not grow into a large plant in an hour (Luke 13: 18-21).

In his parables Jesus also presents the difficulties and hindrances which the realisation of his social ideal will encounter. He says that those who preach, teach, and live the social ideal will be like a man sowing seed. Some seed will fall on good ground, but some on heart-soil as hard as the road through unbelief; some on shallow soil, where there is not depth of soul enough to give it rooting; some among thorns, where worldliness and selfishness already fill the life and absorb the interest (Mark 4:3-9).

Christ teaches that his ideal will meet with carping criticism, as of children sitting in the market place and complaining to their fellows: "We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented" (Matt. 11:16, 17).

From Christ's social ideal men will turn away with excuses, saying, "I have married a wife," or "I have purchased a farm," or "I have bought a yoke of oxen," so that I cannot participate in it. In a word, "I am too intent on my own personal affairs, and too busy with

my own selfish interests" (See Luke 14: 16-24).

Such is the teaching of Jesus: Society is one great family; God is Father of all; all men are brothers; the family ideal will be realised slowly as the centuries proceed; its progressive realisation will encounter many obstructions—the shallowness, fickleness, preoccupiedness, selfishness, greed, cruelty, and sinfulness of men; but ultimately it will be realised.

CARE OF THE WEAK

The characteristics of family life are precisely those which Jesus insists upon for society. In the family the weakest member receives the greatest consideration and the tenderest care; while in society for long centuries the weakest have been exploited, over-worked, cruelly treated, and driven to the wall by the competition of the strong. Weak men and women have been all but ground up to make comforts and luxuries for the powerful. The strong have said that their farms must prosper, their railroads and steamships must pay dividends, their cattle and hogs must bring a profit, their fac-

tories must produce fat returns, no matter what comes to the weak ones in society. Jesus, on the contrary, says: "How much then is a man of more value than a sheep" (Matt. 12:20), the man who is thy weak brother? Were the weak one a member of one's family, one would spend every sheep, every ox, every dollar if need be, to help him. Jesus teaches that the weak one is a member of one's family. Paul says that the law of Christ is that men bear one another's burdens (Gal. 6:2); and that the strong ought to bear the burdens of the weak (Rom. 15:1). The Good Samaritan was a brother to the man who fell among thieves; and Christ purposely places him in strongest contrast with the thieves who exploited the traveller, and with the priest and Levite who neglected the exploited man (Luke 10:25-38).

Christ sets forth this parable as a picture of social relations, and it is as pertinent now as when he uttered it. What have the strong in society been doing but wounding and robbing the weak, and leaving them half dead and help-

less? Inadequate wages in the face of shameless profits, unsanitary tenements, and neglect of the safety of labourers for the sake of economy, furnish abundant testimony. And what have others been doing but passing by the weak, helpless, and robbed members of society, unheeding, uncaring, intent simply on their own affairs? Not thus do we treat those of our own families. Christ pictures the Good Samaritan treating the wounded and helpless man precisely as he or any one would have done had the wounded man been his own brother. That is the way Christ would have us treat every man; and this fact he emphasises by putting himself in the weak brother's place when he says, "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me" (Matt. 25:40).

When one speaks of the duty of the employer to treat the employee as one brother would treat another, there is hearty approval by working men, and there ought to be. But the working man is under precisely the same obligation to treat his employer as a brother.

And both employer and employee are under obligation to extend their brotherhood to the remotest corners of the world. I have known men who approved sentiments of brotherhood in industry, turn away with indifference from every mention of "missions," caring nothing whatever that millions of people in India and China go to bed hungry, sleep on clay floors, and live in densest ignorance and superstition. Those who thus turn away are not different in spirit and practice from the monopolist. The one is so far removed from the needy and the wronged in India and China that he is indifferent to their needs and deaf to their cries for help; the other is so far removed in life-conditions from all labouring men that he is indifferent to their needs and deaf to their cries. The brotherhood which Christ teaches embraces the round world, and includes every man, woman, and child on the globe. And if any man turns carelessly away from the needs of any brother, no matter how far removed, he should not be surprised when others turn away from his needs. It is not the brotherhood of

a few or of a class that Christ stands for, but the brotherhood of all.

EACH WORKING FOR ALL

In the family each member works for the prosperity and happiness of all the members. No one strives for personal advantage at the expense of others. A loss to one is felt to be a loss to all, and a gain to one a gain to all. If one member is honoured all rejoice, if one is disgraced all feel the shame.

That the social family has been very different from this, needs no argument. But Christ's idea is that society shall be like the family in this respect, that, as Paul says, no man shall look simply on his own things, but every man also on the things of others (Phil. 2:4). Christ entered into God's love of the whole world, and he expects every man to do the same. The term "Son of Man," by which Jesus most frequently called himself, links him to the remotest and obscurest human being. He gave his life, not for the few, but for the many (Matt. 20:28), and "whosoever" is the term

by which men are invited to come to him (Rev. 22:17). His benefits were for all; he came to minister to all.

Such facts are not theological any more than sociological. They show Christ living, not for himself, not for his immediate family, not simply for his friends or his nation, but for the whole of society. To bless all mankind he lived, suffered, and died. And it was clearly his thought that his followers should hold his conception of society, and live, not selfishly, nor for a few, but for the greatest good of all. Indeed, Christ put loyalty to man as man above family relations (Luke 14:26); he identified himself with the whole race; and all his calls for loyalty to him are calls for devotion to the interests of mankind (Matt. 25:31 ff.). John, interpreting Christ, says: "Hereby know we love, because he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" (I John 3:16).

RESPONSE TO NEED

In the family the stimulus to action is need. Any member in need becomes the concern of all, and if necessary receives the ministry of all. Other members leave their own affairs, sacrifice their own interests, and hasten to the help of the one in need.

It is precisely this family characteristic which Christ exhibits when he makes himself the Good Shepherd. He leaves the ninety-nine sheep that are safe in the fold, and goes into darkness and danger to find the one lost sheep, the sheep that needs him (Luke 15:3 ff.). Too long has our theological interpretation of Christ's words blinded us to their sociological significance. Christ bids us minister to the needs of men, and to make ourselves the servants of men, even as he did (Matt. 20:25-28).

THE LAW OF LOVE

In the family the motive of action is love. The law of love is not from without but from within. As long as love is dominant family

conditions are stable, and no outward laws are needed. On the contrary, when family affairs get into the courts, and are governed by outward laws, the home becomes unstable and totters to its fall.

So also, while laws are necessary in an imperfect condition of society, men break through outward restraints; they connive together to ignore laws; they bargain with each other not to enforce them; they break laws and flee from the penalties; those in power purchase immunity; and the strong defy the weak.

Christ's ideal for society is that it shall be governed from within, as the family is governed, not by law but by love. "Love," as Paul says, "is the fulfilling of the law; love worketh no ill to his neighbour" (Romans 13:10). Christ came not to destroy, but to fulfil the law (Matt. 5:17). And his law, as we know, was the law of love expressed in service. "Greater love," he says, "hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). And among the last things that he said to his disciples was:

"These things I command you, that ye may love one another" (John 15:17). The "little gospel" begins thus: "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son" (John 3:16); and Christ's hope of society was that men everywhere would respond to that love, and by loving God as their Father come at length to realise their common brotherhood.

He bids men, therefore, come to him, take his yoke, and learn from him how to be sons of God and brothers to men, governed in conduct, not by the compulsion of law, but by the constraint of love (Matt. 11:29).

Men came to Christ and asked which was the most important law. He answered: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself" (Luke 10:27). Love, which is the law of the family, is to become the governing power in society, and only as it does so will society become stable, every individual receive justice, and all attain unto abounding life.

Jesus Christ himself is the key with which

the door of a better future must be unlocked. He came that men might have life, and might have it abundantly. But abounding life can be obtained only in his way. He is the way, the truth, the life.

PART III

CHRIST'S PROGRAMME

X

RELIGION AND MORALS

No nation of which we have knowledge has been moral without being religious. And individual morality, when not consciously religious, is usually demanded by the religious sentiments of the community in which one lives.

Morals is as necessary to religion as religion to morals. "Show me thy faith apart from thy works," said James, "and I by my works will show thee my faith" (James 2:18). Without morality religion degenerates into superstition, while without religion morals lack adequate incentive. Religion is the tree; morals is the fruit.

RELIGION AS IMMEDIATE MOTIVE

Why should a man not deceive, defraud, steal, oppress, be immoral, if he holds such conduct profitable? Is the survival of the fittest not

the law of nature? Is not self-preservation the first law of life, and self-advantage instinctive? Why should the powerful help the weak? Why should one not enjoy himself to the full in his own way, flinging loose all the reins of life, and following where impulse leads?

Many closely reasoned answers might be given to such questions. For example, that transgression of physiological laws ultimately brings disease of body upon both the transgressor and his descendants; that, while there may be seeming advantage in dishonesty, sin will find one out in the end; that, while wrong-doing may give a temporary advantage, right-doing works ultimately for the highest good; that the experience of mankind shows that righteousness works for the permanent good of the whole race.

But while all these, and many other reasons of like character, may be valid for right conduct, they are practically powerless in restraining men from immorality, or impelling them to noble deeds. Few, indeed, act in view of the ultimate good of the race, or the immediate good of all, or the effect upon their descendants,

or even in view of ultimate results for themselves. Not always can men be persuaded to govern their conduct for the good of those immediately about them. Indeed, even parents not infrequently refuse to act for the best good of their own children.

Most people do not act on the basis of reasoned causes, nor in view of remote consequences, nor in order to promote the general good; but rather from immediate impulse, personal desire, present enjoyment, and individual advantage.

There is, therefore, but one safe guide for conduct, and that is the religious. Man must hear an inner voice saying, "Thus saith the Lord." He must have conviction of what God approves, commands, and condemns. He must be persuaded in his own mind that he sins at his peril, and that right-doing is to both his present and eternal advantage.

RELIGION THE BASIS OF MORALS

Two facts stand side by side in experience—the casting aside of religious restraints and the

lowering of moral standards. When children from religious homes drift into evil practices, such as drinking, gambling, the social evil, Sabbath desecration, and such like, they usually, at the same time and to the same degree, let go their religious convictions. And if in the home there be lack of religious convictions, children go forth with flabby ideas of morals, and usually descend in the moral scale as far as their social environment will let them.

The *Literary Digest* for June, 1912, in an article on "The Church as a Curb on Crime," quotes Judge Lewis F. Fawcett, of Brooklyn, New York, as saying:

"Approximately 2,700 cases have been brought before me in my five and a half years of service on the bench. During all this time I have never had to try a man who was at the time of the alleged offence, or ever had been, an active member of the church."

The *Congregationalist* (Boston), from which the quotation is taken, likens the statement to that of a noted Chicago judge, who said that "rarely, almost never, were the parties to a

divorce suit active church workers," and continuing, says:

"Most of our respectable, attractive communities of high moral tone are so because the church of Christ is there. Our beautiful towns are what they are, instead of being hotbeds of vice, drunkenness, and crime, because the church is there. Church members are not usually criminals, whatever else they are. Neither are all non-church members criminals, but the vast majority of criminals come from their class. Were not the town predominantly Christian crime would make it impossible as a home. Therefore every man in the community owes gratitude to the church. He profits from it whether he serves it or not. It is better burglar insurance than the insurance companies. It makes the street safe for his daughters. The stronger the church is, the cleaner, healthier, safer, happier, more respectable the town. If every man were in the church it would save most of the expense for police, judges, lawyers, and courts. Judge Fawcett tells us that crime now costs us $700,000,000 a year. It would

cost us ten times that if there were no churches. It would cost us hardly any of that if all were in the churches."

The comments of these judges suggest with sufficient plainness why our nation is a stench in the nostrils of the world on account of our loose marriages and divorces. It is not through lack of knowledge. Our knowledge has become scientific with respect to the relations of the sexes, the influence of heredity, the conditions of producing a noble race, and the influence of the home on national life. But all our scientific knowledge makes no impression whatever on the divorce evil, which is undermining the very foundations of our social structure. What is lacking is religious conviction, and the fear of God.

RELIGION AND GOVERNMENT

Why are our cities the worst governed in the world? Why are they so filled with corruption, boodling, graft, immorality, and crime? The most concrete, and the most difficult problem before the Christian world to-day is the

Christianising of our great cities. Here the church finds its most baffling task. The reason is that in great cities more than anywhere else religious restraints are thrown to the winds. The reasons for the neglect of religion in cities have been pointed out elsewhere (Chapter III). Attention is here called to the fact that the neglect of religion and the neglect of morals go hand in hand.

When France cast out the Huguenots in the seventeenth century, she cast out the most religious part of her population, and the morals of the nation have suffered ever since. Good morals are the result of faith in a righteous God who requires righteousness in men. This is made clear in the life and teachings of Jesus. He linked all his conduct to the will of his "Father who is in heaven." "My meat," he said, "is to do the will of him that sent me, and to accomplish his work" (John 4:34). As he went to his crucifixion he prayed, "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Matt. 26:39). Apart from the recognised fatherhood of God and consequent brotherhood of

man, Christ had no hope of right conduct. All his ideas of morals were grounded in religion, and morals were expected as the fruit of religion.

UNSETTLED RELIGIOUS CONVICTIONS

Into our times, and perhaps especially into our country, have been thrust many elements tending to unsettle religious convictions. Europe has poured into our population her atheists, agnostics, pessimists, anarchists, and those hostile to all churches on account of the oppression of the mother church in the Old World. Evolution has been knocking at our door, asking that we change our conceptions of the universe, of mankind, and of the relation of God to both. Historic investigation has asked for a revaluation of the Bible, and for a recasting of ideas with reference to the development of religion in the world. Meanwhile religious emphasis itself has shifted from the doctrinal to the practical, from the individual to the social, and from the saving of self hereafter to the saving of others here. While the most

earnest and devout have been and are grappling with many perplexing problems and adjusting themselves to inevitable changes, the less thoughtful have been casting off those religious restraints without which good morals and justice between man and man are hoped for in vain. There is no need of our day that compares in importance with the need of re-emphasising the sanctions of religion. It must be insisted upon that the one authoritative reason for conduct is God's will, that man's destiny is higher than he can measure, and his work both larger and nobler than he knows. The man who would help men to higher levels of life must walk and work, not by sight, but by faith in God Almighty.

DANGERS OF IRRELIGIOUSNESS

The greatest danger of the labour movement to-day is that it become irreligious. "From a previous tendency to overlook the social nature of the teachings of Jesus, the pendulum is now swinging rapidly to the opposite extreme, and the tendency is strong to treat his teachings as

wholly social, and social in a very literal and narrow sense, as concerned mainly with the material welfare of men living in social relations." *

There are ample reasons why labouring men should seek for themselves better industrial conditions. But there is no guarantee, except in religion, that when they have secured all their rights they will not strive for more than their rights, just as the powerful are doing to-day. Mr. Frederic Harrison, the British positivist, who has been active in the cause of labour for fifty years, said during the labour agitation in England in 1912: "Let not workmen think that, given the present tone on both sides of this unrest, any legislative, political, or economic devices will touch the root of the matter. Nothing will touch it but a new and better spirit in all who work and who organise work —a new social, moral, and religious reformation." † Every disfranchised or disinherited person begins by simply claiming his rights;

* Vedder, *Socialism and the Ethics of Jesus,* p. 347.
† See *The Literary Digest,* July 6, 1912, p. 8.

but when rights are secured, and power increased, the crushing of the weak begins. It has always been so. "Plato, with a sort of sad cynicism, reminds us that the tyrant begins always as a protector of the people. . . . In early days the best was the strongest. The supremacy was muscular. A man won his way to the front by his thews and sinews. Later brain power came into play, and the conquest was to the cunning combined with courage. And that is how matters continued for a long period in history." * We are by no means past the period of brains, cunning, and courage. If we are to come to a better condition the next dominant force must be spiritual. No struggle for rights can ever produce a well regulated society unless that struggle be sanctified by a religious spirit. Without religion the oppressed, when they gain the power, turn oppressors. The only force that keeps the strong from oppressing the weak is love of fellowmen; and that love, when broad, deep, and comprehensive, is coupled with the love of God.

* Brierly, *Life and the Ideal*, pp. 109, 110.

Working men who rise to wealth and power will always become oppressors of the weak unless they are spiritual men, loving their neighbours as themselves, and balancing getting with giving. It is a notable fact in this country at this time that most of our "captains of industry" were poor boys; they have worked their way up from the bottom; but that fact does not withhold them from exploitation and oppression now.

It must not be presumed for a moment that the business of the country, which is becoming ever more complex, can be carried on by workmen themselves. Big business requires big men, trained men, efficient men; and captains of commerce must be socialised by being Christianised.

NEW MEN

Jesus Christ is one in purpose with all who would improve social conditions. All should be one with the Master in his *method* of improving social conditions. He teaches that in order to have a new society there must first be new men (Matt. 7:17; John 3:7), spiritual

men, men who see from God's point of view, and are bent on achieving God's ends. Evolution, education, and law are all helpful in securing social betterment, but there can be no question that the greatest need is men with new hearts. This is not only the teaching of Jesus (See John 3 : 1-14), but the most evident fact in the present social struggle. The employer needs a new heart towards his employees, the monopolist a new heart towards the public, the powerful a new heart towards the weak. Those who are wronging their fellows, in whatever way, know what is right, but lack the heart to do what is right. What can be more evident than that they must be born again, just as Jesus said (John 3 : 3-6) ? For two thousand years Christians have emphasised the new birth for the purpose of securing eternal salvation for the individual. It must now be emphasised for the purpose of securing social transformation also.

The socialists are quite right in the emphasis which they place on the social teachings of Jesus, an emphasis which all Christians are rapidly

coming to approve; but the chief hope of getting Christ's social teachings incorporated in life lies in getting men born again by the spirit of God. Christ's *purpose* of renewing society must not be separated from his *method* of renewing society. A bad society is made up of bad men; a good society must be made up of good men. To think of redeeming society without first redeeming individuals is sheer nonsense. Nothing was ever wrought in society which was not first wrought in the hearts of individuals. The chief task, and the most difficult, is to make men good. Christ teaches that this is to be achieved by a spiritual birth, resulting from faith in and loyalty to him as Redeemer and Master. According to Christ, therefore, the crux of the social problem is religious, and all who depart from religion may well despair of its solution.

SEEMING FAILURE OF CONVERSION

The question at once arises: If the spiritual birth is the chief factor in the righting of social wrongs, why have Christians not grappled so-

cial questions more resolutely? and Why is the church of Christ to-day not more alive to social wrongs, and more intent upon righting them?

The answer is plain: The efforts, sacrifices, and heroism of converted men, as of all other men, are directed along the lines of their convictions. Ours is pre-eminently the social century, and Christian men are just beginning to be persuaded that Jesus Christ really meant that human society should be transformed into the kingdom of God, where God's will should be done even as it is in heaven.

Christian heroism has always been magnificent and powerful along the line of Christian convictions. The early Christians believed that this world was soon to come to an end, and that Christ's kingdom was to be established in the next world. For that conviction, and in order that they might not fail of entrance into that kingdom hereafter, they gave up their lives heroically by thousands.

When the end of the world did not come, as was expected, multitudes of Christians for-

sook everything of a worldly character and went into deserts, or shut themselves up in monasteries, that they might live well-pleasing to God, and not be contaminated by society.

The Crusades, stretching through two hundred years, however foolish they may seem to us now, constitute a record of heroic, self-renouncing loyalty to religious convictions.

The missionary movements of the centuries, though not so spectacular as the Crusades, constitute a grand record of heroic devotion to religious beliefs. Such was the evangelisation of Northern Europe by missionaries from the countries about the Mediterranean; such were the missions to the American Indians by the French Jesuits; such has been the missionary record of Protestantism during the past one hundred years, until to-day the messengers of Christ are in every land in the world, and millions of money is given yearly to carry on the work. This self-sacrifice and devotion is from converted men and women, men and women who have been spiritually renewed by Jesus

Christ, and are doing the work in loyalty to him.

None of these great movements, so filled with devoted sacrifice, was started without long preliminary agitation, without lone spirits that saw the vision before others, and prayed to God and pleaded with men for its realisation. Has the world forgotten Isaiah, preaching to an unbelieving people: "The voice of one that crieth, Prepare ye in the wilderness the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God" (Isaiah 40:3)? Has it forgotten John the Baptist, catching up the prophet's cry and delivering it to a people who did not understand: "Make straight the way of the Lord, as saith Isaiah the prophet" (John 1:23)? Has it forgotten Peter the Hermit, and St. Bernard, preaching and pleading to arouse the people for the Crusades? Has it forgotten the prayers and entreaties of Carey, Judson, Moffat, and Livingstone ere the Christian world was awakened to its duty to the heathen?

So now there are Christian men in increasing

numbers, praying, preaching, and writing to bring Christendom to the conviction that Jesus Christ came into the world to remake society after the mind of God. Everywhere in the churches of Christ this conviction is deepening. And when it finally grips the minds and hearts of Christian people, and crystallises into conviction of duty, and takes the form of loyalty to Christ, there will be given to our labour problems, social problems, and commercial problems by the disciples of Christ the same self-renunciation and heroic devotion which in centuries past were put into the conduct of martyrs, hermits, crusaders, and missionaries. There is abundant self-renunciation in Christ's service. In this social century that self-renunciation must be and will be directed to the task of social renewal in a new and enlarged way, for we are just at the beginning of new and enlarged conceptions of the social mission of Jesus, a mission that can be accomplished only by the dynamic of manhood renewed by the Spirit of God, and devoted to the purpose for which Christ lived and died. "Jesus was a teacher, not of ethics

alone, but of religion—his ethics were grounded in his religion, were the necessary consequence of his religion," * and apart from his religion society has no power adequate to the task of living his ethics.

* Vedder, *Socialism and the Ethics of Jesus*, p. 341.

XI

THE NEED OF GOD'S WORD

No power in society compares with the power of religion; and the dominant factor in religion is the Word of God.

As Christ confronted the problem of transforming human relations from a man-ruled to a God-ruled social order, the law that he laid down for himself was: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4).

THE NATURE OF THE BIBLE

Nowhere else is the mind of God so plainly revealed as in the Bible, and the Bible has moulded the mind of Christendom. "As a printed book the Bible has always led the field. Even up to 1490 it had exceeded in the amount of printing all other books put together. A

thousand editions of the Bible, in whole or in part, were issued in the first half-century of the history of printing. From that time onward the Bible has continued to be the best known book in the world." * During the Christian era the nations that have lived by this book have led the van of civilisation, done the most to protect the weak, to promote brotherhood, and to bring every man into his God-given right.

The Bible never was so thoroughly studied as during the last half-century, and it never had so many readers as to-day. The amount of writing that is being done on the Bible at this time is astonishing, and this fact is significant of the vitality of its teachings.

But there are those who analyse the Bible as one might analyse a house—by taking it to pieces, and referring each several part to its origin. "These pine boards," they would say, "came from Oregon, having been freighted over the Northern Pacific Railroad; this flooring is oak from Missouri; these nails are of

* Pattison, in *The Bible in the World To-day*, p. 39.

wire, machine-made, from Wisconsin iron; this plaster was made from Illinois limestone, and is surface-coated with calcined gypsum from Iowa; this furniture is mahogany from the West Indies, originally freighted in American bottoms; these are wool rugs, of European weave, and from Scotch sheep." Similarly they would analyse and refer to its "original source" every piece of bric-à-brac, every personal ornament, and every token of affection.

The one important fact about a house, and the fact lost sight of in such analysis, is that it is a home. Here a young man brought his bride, and they began life together, here everything was consecrated by the sacredness of affection and is eloquent with devotion; here children were born and joy abounded; here the angel of death entered and tears of sorrow flowed; here hope burned, flickered, and revived; here faith was tried, fidelity proved, and love tested. The analysis of the house is comparatively unimportant. This was a *home,* and that is the significant fact.

The Bible is both a house and a home.

Many writers busy themselves analysing only the house, performing their work with such zeal that onlookers are apt to overestimate its importance. These writers seem to forget, or fail to discern, that the Bible is a spiritual home, a place where hearts learn to love, and where spiritual children are born, reared, and trained to live as one family.

There are writers and teachers also who go to the opposite extreme, who simply reiterate the old things in the old way, who read into the Bible much mediæval theology, and keep on dealing with questions which have lost their vitality, who catch no new vision, and feel no thrill of new meanings and applications.

PROBLEMS

The Bible deals with the deepest and most difficult problems of life. Its first concern is with the soul—its life or death, its relation to God, its culture and growth, its gain or loss, and its final destiny. To have the problems of the soul, which is the chief concern of the individual, dealt with as they are dealt with in

the Bible, gives the book its supreme significance for every thoughtful man.

The Bible also deals with the problem of living together, a problem which is vitally connected with the first, but upon which our age is laying special emphasis, and with which we are here particularly concerned. The Bible tells how to make society over into the kingdom of God, a task fundamental to, as well as pervasive of, all other social tasks. "The Bible —unless the history of the twentieth century belie the experience of the century that has preceded it—will be a powerful influence in promoting cleaner lives, and sweeter and saner relations between man and man." *

The contention of the Bible is that a good society cannot be made out of bad men any more than good fruit can come from a bad tree (Matt. 7:7), that the kind of law is not so important as the kind of life (Rom. 13:10), that a man is worth more than a sheep (Matt. 12:12) or barns full of grain (Luke 12:16-21). These are final words on sociology, per-

* Pattison, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

fectly simple and thoroughly obvious. All the learned volumes that have been written on the subject are like the prattle of children beside them.

PRACTICAL TEACHINGS

Men complain that the social teachings of the Bible are not practical. Not long since a political speaker said that all the theories that General Weaver advocated thirty or more years ago in the old Greenback days were held now by the most conservative reactionaries in politics. William Jennings Bryan once said that the Democrats had no platform left to stand on, since the Republicans had stolen every plank of it. What was not thought practical thirty years ago has become practical to-day; and what a few years since was thought to be impracticable Democratic theory has become practical Republican politics. Whether any teaching is practical or not depends on the consecration and heroism of the people. When the people become willing and obedient many things instantly become practicable.

The Bible goes at once to the root of society's evils and is the one book that is practical. All social panaceas have failed because of bad men. Making the tree good that the fruit may be good, is the only method that will prove practical and bring society to a stable condition of well-being.

The cause of labour throughout the whole country has recently suffered a marked reverse because of bad men in the labour ranks, men who lacked regard for life and property, and whose deeds were disavowed by the great army of labourers. Give the cause of labour in this country a few more men to dynamite property and destroy lives, as those recently imprisoned did, and it will take the cause of labour a decade to recover from the injury. The hope of the cause of labour, or any other right cause, is good men. If labour could keep its ranks free from evil men, while it followed only those methods which are fair and honourable, it would be invincible, for its cause is just.

The one book which the labouring man needs to take to heart, and to have the capitalist take

to heart, is the Bible. Labour has no friend like it, no pleader for its cause to compare with it. The cause of labour is the cause of humanity, and the Bible is the book of humanity. "This book," one has well said, "must be heard at the bar of our crowded life pleading for the rights of man, demanding that we should respond to the challenge of God, our common Father. . . . Where else shall the reformer listen to such passionate pleas on behalf of the poor and the outcast and the oppressed as burn on the lips of the Hebrew prophets? Where, as in this book, can you find the power which can make mercy temper justice in the administration of law? The truest feelings of our human nature respond to the spirit of the Bible. . . . In all the great crises of Bible history, with Savonarola in Florence, with Wycliffe at Lutterworth, with Tyndale at Antwerp, with Luther in Wittenberg, with Knox in Edinburgh, the heart of the people has never failed to beat in unison with the Bible." * The Bible makes absolutely no distinction between rich and poor.

* Pattison, in *The Bible in the World To-day*, pp. 58, 59.

Its appeal is to the heart and conscience, and its voice is the voice of God.

SELFISHNESS EXPOSED

Those who find the Bible impracticable are those who find it interfering with their selfish desires. If you put the Bible into the hands of the thief when he is caught with stolen goods, he will say: "It is an impracticable book. If I follow this book I must relinquish the products of my theft, and possibly go to prison." This is precisely the thing required if homes are to be safe and society secure. Put the Bible into the hands of those who have stolen and grafted from the government, and they will tell you that it is not practical, that if they follow this book they must disgorge millions. The people think that such disgorging is the one thing that needs doing. Put the Bible into the hands of the great trusts, which control the necessities of life, and they will at once declare it impracticable, and say that if they follow this book they must stop exploiting the people, and squeeze the water out of dividend-bearing stocks. The

people think that precisely these things must be done before society can come to a fair living basis, to say nothing of a condition of peace and contentment. The practical nature of the Bible lies in the fact that it requires men at the command of God to do precisely what must be done before the wronged and oppressed can come into their own, and every man receive a square deal from his fellows.

INSPIRATION

Volumes have been written about the inspiration of the Bible, but one need not spend a moment arguing that the Bible is inspired. Read it. Does the voice of God not speak to your soul through it? There can be no revelation to him who has not ears to hear. The very atmosphere may be vibrant with voices of God without revealing anything to deaf ears. I was walking one day with a friend who as we walked inquired about the song of a bird. I described the song as best I could, and then asked, Can you not hear it? "No," he replied. "Where? The bird is not singing now, is it?" But not

far away the bird was singing in ecstatic strain. The revelation of God's voice comes, like the song of a bird, not by description or argument, but by hearing. Christ was ever saying to the multitude, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear" (Matt. 11:15). Two men look at a painting of one of the great masters or at a landscape when Nature has on her garments of glory. One remains stolid and unmoved, while the other is thrilled and uplifted. Argument is unavailing for the stolid man. Great paintings or landscapes are not things to be argued about, or even described. They must be seen. There is no revelation of beauty except to the soul that can discern beauty. The Bible has beauty for eyes that can see, music for ears that can hear, and wealth of revelation for souls that can discern and appreciate.

CHARACTER

It is said that the Bible has literary charm; yet one seldom thinks of this fact as he reads its pages. Indeed, one must possess a highly trained literary sense to appreciate it. The lan-

guage of the Bible is simply a fitting vehicle of thought. The form never gets in the way of the substance. The emphasis of the Bible is on character. "Where else," Dr. Pattison inquires, "can you walk through such a portrait gallery of high-minded faces, from Abraham standing up before his dead, to Paul writing his matchless letter to Philemon?" And Dr. King, in the same strain, inquires: "Where else shall one turn to find a line of personalities so grounded in the greatest convictions that men can have, so embodying the mighty decisions of the moral and spiritual life, so moved by the highest ideals and inspired with the largest hopes?" * The Bible is always true to the right. It never flinches, never quibbles, and never shirks the cost. "My only hope for the world," said Gladstone, "is in bringing the human mind into contact with divine revelation." This, if done anywhere, is done in the Bible.

Who can fail to be charmed with the old prophets as they denounce the sins of the people,

* *The Bible in the World of To-day,* pp. 56, 157.

take their starvings and stonings without murmur, point those who persecute them to the ways of God, and cheer and encourage the nation in its calamities? "The great mission and priceless value of the Bible are that it puts us in touch with the most significant lives of the world in the greatest realm, that of the moral and spiritual." *

Who is so dull as not to appreciate John the Baptist as he calls the people to repentance, admonishes them to prepare the way of the Lord, denounces Herod for his gross sins, and takes imprisonment and death without complaint?

Whose heart does not turn to the spotless, sympathetic, loving, and self-giving Christ, to him who was no respecter of persons, who freely forgave every penitent soul, yet condoned no wrong, and died to redeem men from sin, and society from suffering and injustice?

What charm and power come to us from the characters of Abraham, the man of courageous faith; Jacob, the wrestler for mastery over

* King, *op. cit.*, p. 156.

himself; Moses, the shrinking but obedient leader; Paul, the stern but patient and tender apostle; and above all, from Christ, who held the whole race in his heart, and gave his life for a humanity that he loved. "Where else shall one turn for such effective witness to moral and spiritual values? Where else are the personalities to be found who speak as those who have seen the verities of the moral and spiritual world, whose message comes out of such conviction, such character and judgment, with such manifest disinterestedness of love? Who else have power to make the things of the spirit so real, so radiant, so vital? These personalities of the Scripture are truly the moral and religious leaders of the race." *

While the characters of the Bible are very different, they are all alike in this, that according to the light of their day, and after whatever delinquencies, they hew to the line of right whatever the cost. This is the chief charm, and the greatest moral power in any man, anywhere, at any time. Righteousness exalts a man, even

* King, *op. cit.*, p. 158.

as it exalts a nation. It is the divine quality towards which the race progresses.

HOPEFULNESS

The Bible is always hopeful. It combines the demand for perfect men and a perfect society with an undying hope for the realisation of both. When the Psalmist was downcast he cried to his own soul: "Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance and my God" (Ps. 43:5), and in this sentence he well represents the spirit of the Old Testament. Jesus looked upon the sinful and suffering, and said: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28), and this sentence is typical of the spirit of the New Testament. Christ, looking upon men, saw them bruised and deformed by sinning, yet he saw in them beauties and possibilities. He believed in men, and his look was sympathetic, his heart loving, and his touch cleansing. His attitude to man was that of hopefulness and helpfulness.

The hopefulness of the Bible for a redeemed

society is manifest on every page of the book. In the beginning, God, after creating all things, pronounced them good. Though man falls, yet the seed of the woman is to bruise the serpent's head. Abraham sets forth to found a city whose builder and maker is God. Moses leads a people out of slavery to a land flowing with milk and honey. Joshua takes up the uncompleted task of Moses and proceeds to conquer the land. No sooner are the Children of Israel carried into Babylonian captivity than their prophets proclaim the return of a remnant who shall re-establish the nation. As the material fortunes of the people sink there arises the hope of the coming Messiah, who shall deliver them from bondage. And thus throughout the Old Testament there runs an undying hope, an unshakable faith in better days to come.

In the New Testament John the Baptist preaches the coming of one who is to cut down evil as the woodsman cuts down the trees of the forest. Simeon declares Christ to be a light to lighten the Gentiles. Jesus himself proclaims the beginning of a renewed and purged social

order. John, in Revelation, pictures that new social order as a perfect city, the New Jerusalem, let down out of heaven; and in his vision he sees that "the kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ" (Rev. 11:15).

Society is still pressing towards that day and refuses to despair. Truly has it been said that "to a degree true of no preceding generation, this generation is able to enter into the actual situation, for example, of the prophets, to see their problems, their life-task, and the message that it was given them to utter; and their greatness so comes home to us as never before." * In ancient times watchfires were lighted on hilltop after hilltop to convey news. The biblical writers have been the keepers of the watchfires of God, blazing forth the news from age to age, through centuries exceedingly dark, that man was redeemable, that human relations were perfectable, and that God was working with man to redeem and perfect both the individual and society.

* King, *op. cit.*, p. 157.

A like hopefulness inspires Christian workers to-day. Henry Churchill King sounds the keynote of Christian expectation when he says: "It is not an accident that every life of Christ worth reading, outside the Gospels, has been written since the year 1835. To our time, too, belongs the whole rise of the great science of biblical theology, to our time the most searching studies in the teaching of Jesus. Men have been brought face to face with the life and spirit and teaching of Jesus as never before, and it is a reasonable thing to expect the best Christian preaching and the best Christian living the world has ever seen to be just ahead of us, not behind us. For, in spite of all the questions that are raised, the practical lordship of Christ is becoming daily more manifest; never before did his spirit rule so truly in industry, in commerce, in politics national and international. And while we are still only at the beginning of that complete lordship that belongs to him, we have the greatest reason for faith and hope." *

* King, *op. cit.*, pp. 160, 161.

XII

PRAYING THE SOCIAL PRAYER

"AFTER this manner, therefore, pray ye: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors. And bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one" (Matt. 6: 9-13, American Revision).

Dr. Walter Rauschenbusch says: "The Lord's prayer is recognised as the purest expression of the mind of Jesus. It crystallises his thoughts. It conveys the atmosphere of his child-like trust in the Father. It gives proof of the transparent clearness and peace of his soul. . . . The Lord's prayer is the great prayer of social Christianity. It is charged with what we call 'social consciousness.' It assumes the social solidarity of men as a matter

of course. It recognises the social basis of all moral and religious life even in the most intimate and personal relations with God." *

A CONTRAST

To get the full social force of this prayer it needs to be contrasted with the prayer of the Pharisee, which Christ condemns, but which breathes the prevailing religious spirit of his day: "God, I thank thee that I am not as the rest of men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week; I give tithes of all that I possess" (Luke 18:11, 12).

Christ's prayer is warm and glowing; the Pharisee's is as cold as steel. Christ's petition is humanity-centred; the Pharisee's is self-centred. One expresses the inclusiveness of a family; the other, a ruthless separateness. Our Lord identifies himself with every human creature; the Pharisee exalts himself above what he regards as the common herd. Jesus brings all men together to the heart of the Father;

* *For God and the People,* pp. 15, 23.

the Pharisee holds only himself and his kind favourites of God. The Lord's prayer breathes the spirit of social solidarity; the Pharisee's, that of social exclusiveness. Christ expresses confidence in the coming of the new social order, which he calls the Father's kingdom; the Pharisee has no such hope, nor even such desire.

LIP SERVICE

During all the Christian centuries men have repeated the Lord's Prayer with their lips, often doubtless with the feeling that it was an unimportant and colourless addendum to their more informing and specific personal petitions; while in their prayers there have been not a few of the Pharisaic elements, such as separateness, aloofness, more-worthy-than-thou-ness, and lack of the identification of self with the interests of every human being.

The hope of social amelioration brightens as men depart from the spirit of the Pharisee's prayer, and come truly and from the heart to pray the Lord's Prayer. This transition, however, does not take place in a day or a decade,

as the centuries abundantly attest, but comes slowly with depth of spiritual insight and breadth of spiritual culture.

POWER OF PRAYER

One need not dwell here upon the hopelessness of social betterment where men do not pray at all. The hope of social betterment is in Christ—in his ideas of God and men as one family; in his spirit of love, sympathy, and helpfulness; in his principles of purity, honour, and fair-dealing; in his methods of getting God's will done among men; and in his power to renew men's hearts.

One of the chief factors in Christ's life and work was prayer; and he taught all who would hope in him and work with him to pray. Too long we have deemed it simply meritorious, for example, to pray for those who despitefully use us and persecute us. On the contrary, it is the best way to stop persecution. Prayer is power. It does work. Even the late Professor James, whose inclinations were philosophical and scientific rather than religious in the orthodox

sense, said: "The fundamental religious point is that in prayer, spiritual energy, which otherwise would slumber, does become active, and spiritual work of some kind is effected really." *

Jesus did not pray simply for his own satisfaction, or as a religious exercise. His recorded prayers were uttered when he had difficult tasks to perform. Before he chose his twelve disciples he spent all night in prayer (See Luke 6:12, 13). When he began to make known to those disciples that he must die for the people, and was soon to leave Galilee for Jerusalem, where the tragedy was to be enacted, he took Peter, James, and John apart for prayer, and was transfigured before them (See Luke 9:28, 29). When he was about to be crucified he went into the Garden of Gethsemane, and for a time was in an agony of prayer (See Luke 22:39-46).

Christ taught his disciples that God's purposes were to be achieved through prayer. "Ask," he said, "and it shall be given unto you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall

* *Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 477.

be opened unto you" (Luke 11:9). And again, "Verily I say unto you, if ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place, and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you" (Matt. 17:20).

Who shall say what would be the effect on our labour problems if a thousand employees, on a strike for higher wages, should give themselves unitedly in earnest prayer for their employers, praying that God would lead both them and their employers to judge fairly and deal justly? When thousands of men are conscious of a great wrong, what would be the effect if, in love to God and love to men, they should unitedly pray that God would move upon the hearts of those at fault to make the wrong right? All legal and legitimate means to right our wrongs should, of course, be employed. But a new spirit is needed to-day, both in those who are economically strong and in those who are economically weak—the spirit of the fear of God, the spirit of the love of man, the spirit which recognises the sacredness of human

relations, the spirit of responsibility both to men and to God. Such a spirit is born, not of economic war, but of prayer. War separates; prayer unites. Christianity conquered the Roman world, not by fighting, but by praying. By the power of prayer the ancient pagans were brought to a new sense of God; and by the same power modern pagans must be brought to a new sense of God, and to a new sense of responsibility to man.

George Macdonald says: "Each generation must do its own seeking and finding. The fathers having found is only the warrant for the children's search." * The great tasks of Christianity in the past were wrought with much prayer. Jesus set the example; the apostles followed; and Christians have never ceased to pray. The early church was founded in prayer; the Mediterranean world was transformed through prayer; Europe was Christianised by prayer. The foundations of our national life were laid in prayer; the Revolution was fought in prayer; the Rebellion was put down in prayer.

* Jones, *Social Law in the Spiritual World,* p. 31.

All these great tasks were performed in the consciousness of God, and in faith that he would give success to the right.

What battles the men of to-day are fighting! —battles for equality of opportunity, battles for a proper share in the products of toil, battles against the monopolising of Nature's gifts, battles against the appropriation of society's benefits by the few. These battles are as truly for home and children as any ever fought; and, like the others, they should be fought in the fear of God, confident of the triumph of the right.

Our prayers naturally accompany our religious work, our charities, our efforts at friendliness for the purpose of helpfulness. Dr. Edward T. Devine says: "I confess that it is my own strong conviction that the provision of neighbourhood facilities for spontaneous social intercourse, the shortening of hours, the raising of wages, the improvement of health, and other similar methods, will prove more productive of the best kind of neighbourliness and mutual personal service, than all the efforts consciously

directed towards that specific end." * Dr. Devine is doubtless correct, and those who are seeking readjustment of economic and social conditions should seek in prayer, trusting in God. Christ is the world's conqueror, and those who would conquer permanently must conquer with him, and in his spirit. The battles of our century can be won only as Christ won, in the spirit of that prayer which he taught us all to pray.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

It is of utmost importance, not only that working men themselves pray this prayer in sincerity, but that, by their encouragement of religion in all men, they do their utmost to get their employers to pray it in sincerity. Observe a few things that the praying of the Lord's Prayer signifies:

OUR FATHER

"Our Father," as Dr. Rauschenbusch says, "is the social approach to God." The words

* *Misery and its Causes,* pp. 163, 164.

exclude selfish petition. They can be uttered sincerely only out of the consciousness of brotherhood. And whom shall we include in "our"? Indeed, dare we exclude any—the poorest, humblest, lowest, or the richest, proudest, highest?

When we pray in public we say "Our Father," meaning the Father of all present, and in the thought that all are praying unitedly. When we pray in private we doubtless say "O Lord, My Heavenly Father." This is not what our Lord taught us to say. He taught us to go into the private place, and in our personal petitions pray "Our Father." But if when the day is done we kneel alone and pray "Our Father," surely we can but mean, in the narrowest range of thought and feeling, the Father of all whom we have met and dealt with that day, the Father of weak and strong, rich and poor, sinning and righteous; the Father of him to whom we should have been kind, but were not; the weak ones we might have helped, but did not; the burdened ones we neglected to relieve, the stupid ones we failed to be patient

with, the sinning ones we had no charity for—"Our Father," the Father of all these, of every one whom my life has touched and influenced to-day, "for all these I pray, for thou art the Father of them all, and these are all my brothers." Surely the circle of interest cannot be made narrower than this, while, if we are to enter fully into the spirit of the Master, it must be greatly enlarged.

HALLOWED BE THY NAME

But the evening prayer to "Our Father" will die on one's lips, or fall meaningless to the earth, unless during the day one has really been trying to hallow the Father's name in his relations with all who are included in the term, "our."

George Matheson says that prayer for spiritual things is always answered before it is asked. It is like the sense of beauty in the heart before one discerns beauty, the germ of knowledge in the mind before one seeks knowledge, the mercy of God already in the soul when one prays "God be merciful to me, a sinner."

Growing Christians pray most for growth in grace; kind people pray most for kindness; those who do most for people pray most for people. That is, prayer is an expression of what is already in the life, as well as a petition for more.*

One cannot truly pray "Hallowed be thy name" unless he is striving to hallow the Father's name in his daily relations with his fellow-men. He cannot truly pray "Thy kingdom come" unless he is endeavouring to make all his conduct and dealings an expression of the Father's will. If one prays sincerely "Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come, thy will be done," the answer must already have begun in him who prays, and his prayer must be a yearning for the larger expression and ampler fulfilment of his desire.

OUR DAILY BREAD

To be anxious for nothing, we must be prayerful for everything. In a world filled with

* See *Rest by the River*, pp. 104-106.

plenty for all, Jesus well knew that many were anxious about daily bread; and so he bade us pray "Give us this day our daily bread." But in our day prayer for daily bread means prayer for the financially strong, that they may be less ruthless; prayer for the covetous, that they may be less exacting; prayer for economic enemies, who persecute us and do all manner of evil against us.

One has said that the basis of prayer is sympathy, and that we need to make sympathy, not space, the standard of measurement, that hereafter we shall doubtless measure, not by miles of space, but by miles of sympathy, that if Judas and Nathanael were placed on one side of the world, and the apostle John on the other, and John were to send a message to each, the message to Nathanael would arrive far ahead of the message to Judas, for sympathy gives speed.*

Though the illustration be fanciful, it holds a point of great significance, which our modern psychology corroborates, for a sympathetic relation is a means of getting work done, and

* See Matheson, *op. cit.*, p. 174.

of producing changes, though people be far apart. We are enfolded in the sympathy of our Heavenly Father. Even if the form of our petition be wrong, prayed, as is likely, in ignorance of our real needs, yet if we pray out of hearts that are sympathetic with all mankind, the Father, whose sympathy is over all, answers, not our words, but our needs.

What a wealth of sympathetic fellowship there is in "Give *us* this day *our* daily bread"! It is worry more than work that wearies us. And most of our anxiety is over temporal, not spiritual, affairs. Jesus sympathised with the hungering multitudes and fed them; with the sick, the lame, the blind, and healed them; with the sorrowing, and comforted them. To his perplexed disciples he said: "Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings? and not one of them is forgotten in the sight of God. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, ye are of more value than many sparrows" (Luke 12:6, 7).

And yet, notwithstanding such complete sympathy, there is running through the Lord's

Prayer a subtle note of sternness, which forbids the claiming of God's sympathy for one's self unless one extend his own sympathy to his brother. Jesus teaches us to pray, not Give me my daily bread, but "Give *us our* daily bread."

And whom shall we include in "us" and "our"? Must one not include at least those in economic relations with himself? And can one include these if his relations with them are unbrotherly? Shall one pray: "Our Father who art in heaven, remember in love and mercy the man I gambled out of fifty dollars to-day, and give him his daily bread; have mercy on the man I took into the saloon and treated to liquor to-day, and keep his family from want; be merciful to the man for whom I worked yesterday, taking full pay for half work, do not let him come to bankruptcy. Heavenly Father, protect the man I traded with last week, taking all the profit and imposing on him a loss, give him his daily bread"? Shall the employer pray: "Lord, have mercy on my employees, out of whom I am grinding the

last possible penny; do not let their families lack any necessity; and even give them some of the luxuries, which we all so much enjoy"? Shall the carpenter pray: "Lord, remember in mercy the man I built a house for last summer; thou knowest the dishonest walls; keep him warm when the winter winds whistle through them"? Shall the merchant pray: "Be merciful, Heavenly Father, to the customer to whom I gave short weight and poor groceries to-day"? Shall men thus pray? Can men truly pray out of such relations with their fellows? Surely no man can pray from his heart, "Give us this day our daily bread," unless he "totes fair," unless he shares the profits of labour justly, unless he deals with every man as with a brother. Every person that one does not act towards as a brother is shut out of this petition which Jesus taught us—unless one first pray, "God be merciful to me, a sinner" (Luke 18:13). None can be godly who are not brotherly. None can hope for the care of God who refuse their own care to their fellows. None may pray, "Give us this day our daily

bread," who by covetousness and greed are making it difficult for their fellows to earn their daily bread. None may pray, "Lead us not into temptation," who, while they grow rich, help to fill brothels with "over-fatigued and underpaid girls, procured by young men 'too poor to marry.'" * None may pray, "Deliver us from evil," while careless of the evil con-

*Jane Addams in *Survey*, May 4, 1912, p. 198. Of the relation between wages and white slavery Miss Addams says: "The aphorism that 'morals fluctuate with trade' was long considered cynical, but it has been demonstrated in Berlin, in London, in Japan, as well as in several American cities that there is a distinct increase in the number of registered prostitutes during periods of financial depression and even during the dull season of leading local industries. Out of my own experience I am ready to assert that very often all that is necessary to effectively help the girl who is on the edge of wrong-doing is to lend her money for her board until she finds work, provide the necessary clothing for which she is in such desperate need, persuade her relatives that she should have more money for her own expenditures, or find her another place at higher wages. Upon such simple economic needs does the tried virtue of a good girl sometimes depend" (*A New Conscience and an Ancient Evil*, pp. 77, 78).

ditions into which their fellow-men are brought, either by their conduct or their consent.

The chief hope of better social and economic conditions, is that men everywhere and in every condition of life become men of prayer, for God reveals his will only to those who earnestly seek him. Society needs to be made over from a kingdom of selfish greed and exploitation into the kingdom of God, where God's will shall be done. But men cannot even know God's will, much less do it, unless they are men of prayer. "If any of you lacketh wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him" (James 1:15).

XIII

LIVING THE ATONING LIFE

THE weakness of twentieth-century Christianity is that so many Christians let Christ bear the whole burden of redeeming men. They accept Christ's sacrifice for themselves without entering into Christ's spirit of sacrifice. They appropriate to themselves all the merits of Christ in a semi-sacrificial sense to make their personal peace with God, instead of incorporating Christ-likeness into their own lives to make social peace among men. Christ bore his cross, but they do not bear theirs. Christ laid down his life, but they do not lay down theirs.

CHRIST'S TEACHINGS PLAIN

Yet Christ's teachings are sufficiently plain. To his disciples he said: "Whosoever would be great among you shall be your minister; and whosoever would be first among you shall be

your servant; even as the Son of Man came, not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matt. 20:26-28).

At the last supper Jesus gave a concrete example of a social principle when he washed his disciples' feet, and said: "Ye call me Master and Lord; and ye say well, for so I am. If I then, the Lord and the Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye also should do as I have done to you" (John 13:13-15).

Jesus was illustrating, not only the principle of his own life, but the principle of the Christian's life when he said: "Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit. He that loveth his life loseth it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal" (John 12:24, 25).

John catches the social law of Christ's life when he says: "Hereby perceive we the love

of God, because he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" (I John 3: 16).

INTERPRETING JESUS CHRIST

No past interpretation of Jesus Christ is adequate to the needs of the present. And it is safe to say that no present interpretation will be adequate to the larger needs of the future. Each age must make its own interpretation, an interpretation born of its own needs, and made possible by its own capacity. This, Jesus taught when he said to his disciples: "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth. . . . He shall glorify me, for he shall take of mine, and shall declare it unto you" (John 16: 12-15).

As long as the dominant idea of Christians was personal redemption to a kingdom of God hereafter, the prevailing interpretation of Christ was that he redeemed the individual by sacrificing his life on the cross. This conception

called for no corresponding sacrifice on the part of the redeemed man, because no adequate object was in view to call forth such sacrifice. But when the kingdom of God, conceived as a new social order, takes possession of the mind, a new and enlarged interpretation of Christ becomes imperative. All former interpretations are seen to be partial, corresponding to the partial social task that man had set for himself. Our social century is finding in Christ riches until now undiscovered, for he meets adequately the utmost reach of our new social conceptions, and awakens in us convictions hitherto unfelt, and lays upon us duties heretofore unrecognised.

THE REDEMPTIVE PRINCIPLE

Christ is, not only a redeeming personality, but also the embodiment of a redemptive principle. The law of life in him must become the law of life in us. The principle of redemption must become operative in Christians. This is what it means to take up one's cross and follow Christ. The purpose of cross-bearing is the same in us as in Christ—not to save one's

own soul, but to save society from sin and suffering and wrong.

THE DEMAND OF THE MASSES

Every human institution, whether political, social, or religious, tends to become stereotyped. Politics get into the hands of the machine, and the brakes are clapped on the wheels of progress. Lodges, associations, and clubs fall into the hands of a few, who tend to exclusiveness and aristocracy. The church is the most democratic institution on earth, yet a comparatively few great minds have marked out the lines of her thinking, and determined her practices.

On account of this tendency of all human institutions to draw into narrow lines of permanency, note should be taken of the mind of the masses, and heed given to the voice of the people. Governments are reformed, not by those in power, but by the demands of the rank and file. Christianity originally arose, not from the recognised religious authorities, but from the common people.

The religious demand of the masses to-day

is that Christians live like Christ, that they incorporate in their lives his principles. And in this demand the people are not unreasonable. They do not look for the impossible, or expect perfection. But they do expect the disciple to make a sincere endeavour to be as his Master. They care little for beliefs, and less for custom. They believe in the person, Jesus Christ, and in every one who sincerely undertakes to live like him.

The masses to-day are insisting on the social interpretation of Jesus Christ, and are demanding the actual setting up of his kingdom in society. To be sure, there are conflicting ideas, wrong conceptions, and selfish motives, as always in any movement for the betterment of mankind. But the demand that Christians sincerely undertake to live for the redeeming of society and the renewing of the whole social order, as Christ did, or be refused the faith of the world, is a demand the justice of which can no longer be questioned.

THE OLD AND THE NEW

The Spirit of God is at work, not only in the hearts of the scholars, but in the hearts of the people as well. And it may be that the people to-day understand the gospel of Christ better than the scholars and theologians of yesterday. At any rate, the people no longer believe in living for a New Jerusalem in heaven when John saw the New Jerusalem descending out of heaven to be upon the earth (See Rev. 21:10 ff.). The people know that Christ came to minister to men, and that those who exploit men have no part either in his spirit or purpose. The people are persuaded that God will not have mercy on those who deal mercilessly (Matt. 18:32-35). They know that the signs of the gospel are that the lame walk, the blind see, the hungry are fed, the naked clothed, and the poor have the gospel preached to them (Luke 7:22). They believe, and rightly, that these signs follow real Christianity, not as a dole of charity, but through the channels of work and trade, and in

ways that enable men to preserve their self-respect.

The people to-day understand perfectly well that Christ commanded his followers to put first—before their own pleasure and profit—his kingdom, viz., the doing and the getting done of God's will. The people know that Christ's kingdom means, not only honesty and a square deal, but the doing as one would be done by, the loving of one's neighbour as one's self, the treating of every man as a brother, and sacrificing and suffering if need be to treat the brother fairly.

It would be as reasonable to expect people to believe in the most cruel phases of Calvinism as to believe in the Christianity of the capitalist who evades laws and purchases legislation, no matter how prominent he may be in the church. People feel their intelligence is insulted when asked to believe in the Christianity of the wealthy who cut wages, crush competition, raise prices, and roll up millions to give as public benefactions, fully as much as they feel insulted if asked to believe in the

Christianity of the base and immoral among the poor. Shall the rich who refuse young women a living wage be reckoned Christians because, forsooth, their theology is straight, or their names are on the church roll, while their employees, whose virtue has been imperilled by economic conditions and they possibly driven to "that hideous choice between starvation and vice which is perhaps the crowning disgrace of civilisation," * are held to be outcasts? Sensible people cannot be expected to believe in the Christianity of those who have not the spirit of Christ towards their fellow-men, and who do not incorporate in their lives those principles of self-renunciation and self-giving which Christ exhibited.

Christ said: "By their fruits ye shall know them" (Matt. 7:16, 17), and Paul said: "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his" (Rom. 8:9). But the matter has gone wholly beyond arguments and proof texts. It is all but settled in the minds of mul-

* Jane Addams, *A New Conscience and an Ancient Evil*, p. 49.

titudes of people, and against all arguments to the contrary, that he only is a Christian who incorporates in his life the redeeming principle of service.

IN THE LIGHT OF HISTORY

In the first few centuries of the Christian era Christianity was greatly affected by the prevailing heathen religions. Christianity conquered the Roman world, to be sure, but not without being influenced and modified by the conquered. For a thousand years Christian priests, image-worship, monasteries, penances, and indulgences were more than half heathen.

In the sixteenth century the more spiritual minds in the church repaired to the standard of Paul: "By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God" (Eph. 2:8), and immediately Protestant theologians began to construct adequate statements of faith, which have come down to us in the creeds. Under the creeds the measure of a man's Christianity was his orthodoxy.

The spiritual minds of our times are repair-

ing to the standard of James to correct the incomplete statement of Paul: "Faith, if it hath not works, is dead" (Jas. 2:17), and to the original statement of Christ, already quoted: "By their fruits ye shall know them" (Matt. 7:16), and "Whosoever doth not bear his cross and come after me cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:27).

THE CHRISTIANITY OF JESUS CHRIST

The watchword, "Back to Christ," is more needed to-day than ever. We must get back to Christ, not only from the theological accumulations of the centuries, and from the forms of worship and customs of work developed by the church, but, if Christian writers themselves are to be heeded, even from the interpretations of Christ given to us by the apostles, especially by Paul.* Whether such Christian writers be right or wrong, certainly the outstanding demand of our century is to know what the Christianity of Jesus Christ really was.

* See Vedder, *Socialism and the Ethics of Jesus,* chs. IX-XII.

And the demand takes a most practical form. It asks, not for definitions or theological statements, but for Christ's ethics in daily life—in housekeeping, storekeeping, trading, labouring, buying and selling, employing and being employed.

THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

I cannot agree with Dr. Vedder, that Paul, by his philosophical interpretation of Christ, diverted Christianity from its proper social function. To a complete interpretation of Christ there is a fulness of time necessary, just as a fulness of time was necessary to his coming. This, Christ plainly stated when he said to his disciples: "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now" (John 16: 12). Paul interpreted Christ for his own day, and gave the interpretation that was necessary then, and, indeed, is necessary now, and always will be necessary. But Paul's was not a social age. It was an age of hair-splitting Jewish theology, and subtle Greek philosophy; an age of tyranny, war, and slaves. Humanity

had not yet emerged in the modern sense. Indeed, it was Christ's valuation of the individual that started its emergence. Social ideals were not yet rooted. Such social interpretation of Christ as our age demands, believes in, and in part responds to, Paul's age would have regarded in blank amazement. The time had not yet come. In fact, it is not so much a matter of interpretation, as of emphasis. Ours is the age of social emphasis.

Two things in Christ's life and teaching we are at last bringing to their proper emphasis. The first is the fact that Jesus placed spiritual things first, and taught that no one could be a Christian who placed them second. When they brought the sick to him for healing, he said: "Son, thy sins are forgiven thee" (Mark 2:5). When he had satisfied the hungry with bread, he was disappointed because they did not discern the bread of life (John 6:20). The man of many barns he called a fool because he neglected his soul (Luke 12:20). Dives he placed in hell because his heart was closed against the needy (Luke 16:19, 20). "Seek ye first the

kingdom of God," he said to his disciples (Matt. 6:33).

No question of advantage or profit, comfort, or luxury, did Christ ever allow to come before spiritual considerations. The whole stress and devotion of his life was to get God's will done. This purpose and endeavour must characterise the Christian to-day, for this is what it is to be a Christian according to the light of our times. Our age will no longer take seriously, and ought not to, the one who says that he believes in Christ, and accepts theologically all that Christ has done to redeem his soul, while refusing in a practical way and in daily life and dealing to do the will of God. The Christian who is believed in to-day is the Christian of whom it is true, as it was true of Christ, that "his meat is to do the will of him that sent him and to accomplish his work" (John 4:34), and who puts his strength and enthusiasm into the one thing that Christ came to do, viz., to make out of society a new social order that can properly be called the kingdom of God. The Christian that our day demands

is the Christian who places first what Christ placed first, and lives for it.

THE ATONING LIFE

The second fact to which our age is beginning to give proper emphasis is that to be a Christian is to live an atoning life, a life in which one bears the sins of his fellows by sacrificing and suffering on their behalf. Upon the man who lives in the spirit and with the purpose of Christ falls the burden of the ignorance, obtuseness, grovelling character, selfishness, and sinfulness of the people. "The chastisement of their peace" is upon the Christian, and "with his stripes" they are to be healed if healed at all—healed of ignorance, sordidness, and sin.

The Christian cannot take the place of Christ, or do his work, but the redemption principle must be in the disciple as well as in the Master, and must be lived out in the world by both. Out of the stress of his own times Paul glimpsed the demand of our day upon the Christian when he wrote, "Now I rejoice in my sufferings for

your sake, and fill up on my part that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh" (Col. 1:24).

PERSECUTIONS

Let the Christian resolutely set about to clean up the lawlessness of his own town, and the lawless will curse him, friends will be alienated, many will stand aloof, and his business will suffer. By some he will be misjudged, by others deliberately maligned and persecuted. In a word, there is a crucifixion for the Christian as well as for Christ if he bear the sins of others. Let the Christian politician set himself against the corruption and selfishness of the money-power, and a score of forces will pounce upon him. Friends will turn from him, supporters leave him, the influential denounce him, and papers and magazines chastise him. Another generation may call him blessed, but in his own generation he lives the atoning life. "The chastisement of the peace" and well-being of the people is upon him, and "with his stripes they are healed." As long as there is so much

sin and self-seeking in the world, this, in some degree, will be true of every one dominated by the spirit of Christ. Let a Christian engaged in any business where profits are unwarrantably high, and wages unreasonably low, cut profits, raise wages, and establish business on a brotherhood basis, and forces from a dozen directions will set upon him to drive him to the wall, and he will be compelled to sweat blood to maintain himself, and may ultimately be crushed. But the next generation will be found doing the very thing for which his generation crucified him. His was the atoning life, the life which, losing itself like the " grain of corn," springs ever anew in multiplied fruitage.

PROGRESS OF CIVILISATION

Civilisation has doubtless been carried as far as it can be carried under the theological conception that Christ lived and died to redeem men from a sin-cursed earth to enjoy the bliss of heaven. Beyond question such a conception is a true and blessed one, pointing to a fact unspeakably precious; but the conception em-

bodies only half the truth, and is no longer adequate. Through the development of history and the battlings of the centuries the Holy Spirit, according to the promise, has been taking of the things of Christ and showing them unto men (John 16: 14); and the particular thing that the Spirit has been showing is that the Christian must reproduce in spirit, purpose, and endeavour, the life of Christ, the life that bears in its own body the sins of men and, while being crucified, prays, " Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do " (Luke 23: 34).

NOT NEW

The fact here pointed out, that the Christian must live the atoning life, is not new. It is as old as the history of redemption. The fifty-third chapter of Isaiah gathers the historic consciousness of Israel into a portrait of Christ. The suffering servants of Jehovah—that is, the godly in Israel who lived true to their mission—so incorporated the atoning principle that for the prophet to describe them was to describe the Saviour of men.

Upon his disciples Christ was ever laying the duty of living the atoning life. "My cup indeed ye shall drink" (Matt. 20:23), he said to those who sought to be of service. To the multitude he declared: "If any man cometh unto me, and hateth not his own father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:26).

Paul "suffered the loss of all things" which looked to earthly advantage for the cause of Christ (Phil. 3:8); and but for his purpose to "fill up" the sufferings of Christ, the history of Christianity would have been very different.

"The blood of the martyrs was the seed of the church," and had the martyrs refused the atoning life the church of Christ would have been submerged by heathenism.

But now again, in a new direction, and in an enlarged way, the atoning life is demanded. A social century calls for devotion to the social good. A business age calls for the spirit of Christ in business. Organised capital and or-

ganised labour call for brotherhood. The demand of the masses, the insistence of the best Christian writers, and the growing appeal of the pulpit, is for Christians to live the atoning life, to forget their own salvation in devotion to the well-being of their fellows. Only planted seed grows. And only lives lost in service are saved lives.

Christ has not failed with men in the past, and he will not fail now. Christians are beginning to respond to the new and enlarged demands; and as they come to understand more fully Christ's social ideas and demands they will respond with increasing loyalty and devotion.

XIV

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF CREATORS

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was waste and void: and darkness was upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light that it was *good.*

. . . . .

"And God said, Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear; and it was so. And God called the dry land earth: and the gathering together of the waters called he seas; and God saw that it was *good.*

. . . . .

"And the earth brought forth grass, herb yielding seed after its kind, and tree bearing fruit, wherein is the seed thereof, after its kind; and God saw that it was *good.*

. . . . .

"And God made the two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night; he made the stars also. And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness; and God saw that it was *good.*

. . . . .

"And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and let fowl fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven. And God created the great sea-monsters, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly after their kind, and every winged fowl after its kind; and God saw that it was *good.*

. . . . .

"And God made the beast of the earth after its kind, and the cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after its kind; and God saw that it was *good.*

. . . . .

"And God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and

female created he them. *And God blessed them;* and God said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. . . . And God saw every thing that he had made, and behold, it was *very good.*" *

CREATED FOR GOOD

Whatever be the method of creation—and nothing is said about method in Genesis—this chapter is eloquent with what has come to be the common belief of men, that *God created all things for good.* Such conviction is necessary in order to belief in God at all. Otherwise God would become devil. Men who are not godly readily concede and heartily cherish the fact that God is good. Those who do not acknowledge the claims of Christ speak of God as "Creator and Ruler of the universe," and fondly believe that his love is over all—even to an extent that makes God not too particular

* See Genesis, chapter 1. The italics are the author's.

about sin. In short, it is the settled conviction of all enlightened men that God created all things for good, and that he works continuously for the good of all that he has made.

CREATIVE RESPONSIBILITY

It is the settled conviction of men also that God, who creates, is under sacred obligations to work for the good of his creatures, that he is not justified in using them for his own pleasure unless his pleasure is coincident with their well-being. Enlightened men can no longer hold the idea of the ancients, that God may use his power arbitrarily and capriciously, and without moral responsibility. We even protest against Paul's view, that God may deal with man as the potter deals with clay, until we remember that the potter honours clay by making it into a vessel, for whatever use. Men made in the soul-image of God cannot long believe that God may so act as to contradict their moral sense. God could not be moral unless he worked constantly for the good of man. A god who used his creatures selfishly, and simply for his own

pleasure, irrespective of their good; a god who gained his satisfaction at cost of the want, suffering, and ignorance of men, would be a devil. Precisely this constitutes our idea of the devil, that he is one who selfishly serves his own ends, who cares not for sorrow, suffering, and want; who hesitates not to crush man's aspirations, and to defeat the best in man; who studies simply to fulfil his own desires, heedless of the evil he entails.

MAN AS CREATOR

Man as well as God is a creator. God furnishes raw materials; man modifies and combines. God created the vegetable world in the wild, but man has made it over by cultivation. Without man God never would raise seventy-five bushels of corn to the acre; never would make a thornless cactus or an American Beauty rose; never would turn over the sod of the prairie and make oats, wheat, barley, and corn grow where formerly grew only prairie grass and flowers; never would dig canals, construct dams, and turn mountain streams upon desert

lands until they waved with grain and blossomed with orchards; never would construct railroads and build steamships to distribute the necessities of life.

Under the processes of civilisation man, as truly as God, is the creator of the conditions that affect for weal or woe millions of his fellows. God alone would never build a city, never lay street-car lines, never invent automobiles, never string telegraph and telephone wires, never build tenement houses, never establish department stores, never run sweatshops or saloons, nor do a thousand other things that enter into the making and running of a city. Man is the creator of the city with all its attendant conditions as truly as God is Creator of sun, moon, and stars.

God alone would never organise a school, never write a book, never paint a picture, never make a musical instrument, never carve an image from marble. Man is as truly the creator of the culture that so vitally affects society as God is Creator of the earth.

God alone would never organise a nation,

never establish government, never project commerce, never build factories, erect churches, or mine silver, gold, iron, or coal. Man is essentially and necessarily creative. The creative faculty in him is as indispensable to civilisation as the creative faculty in God is to the making and organising of the universe.

GOD OR DEVIL

Because man is the creator of the conditions under which his fellows live and work, precisely the same responsibility attaches to man as creator as attaches to God as Creator.

Should man in his capacity as creator act like God or devil? Should his motive be that of God or devil? Should the object which he seeks be such as God would seek, or such as the devil would seek?

What would the devil do if he were a man? Think of the man who betrays innocence, creating conditions of life which put another in a living hell. That is what the devil would do if he were a man.

Think of men working their fellows almost

day and night at starvation wages, under unsanitary conditions, while as a consequence children are half-fed, half-clothed, uneducated, and imbibe all the villainy of the streets. That is what the devil would do if he were a man.

Think of men living selfishly, exploiting their fellows, taking every possible advantage, working constantly for their own good and heedless of the good of others, creating conditions which redound to their own interests while the interests of others suffer, getting all they can for themselves and giving as little as possible to those in their power. This is precisely what the devil would do if he were a man.

Think of the conditions which allow men to sell liquor, which make it easy for men to be tempted to drink, which entice the young to gamble away their earnings, which incite to immorality. These are the conditions the devil would create if he were a man.

SONS OF GOD

Man, the creator of the conditions in which his fellows live, the controller of the forces

which hold men in thrall, should take lessons of God, his Creator. In spirit, purpose, and conduct, he should be a son of God. He should create all things for good to all whom his creating affects. To create simply for his own pleasure and advantage is devilish. Just as God sends sunshine on evil and good alike, so, Christ teaches, men are to love enemies as well as friends. Not, however, that they themselves may be righteous—that is not the reason that God sends sunshine and rain—but to create conditions under which the weak, ignorant, blind, and sinful, may rise into higher manhood.

In home and school, in business and government, in recreation and religion, in private affairs and public affairs, men are creators of conditions which bless or blight, degrade or uplift, make of life a heaven or a hell.

Men are creators of thought, and it should be right thought; of conviction, and it should be honest conviction; of ideals, and they should be true ideals. A public press prostituted to selfish interests, which leads thought astray, creates wrong conviction, and lowers ideals, is dev-

ilish. That is the kind of press the devil would conduct if he were a man.

Men are creators of the physical conditions under which their fellows live, and they should be elevating. The body should not be made to occupy unsanitary quarters in summer and shiver with cold in winter by greedy landlords. Children should not be deprived of the freedom and joy of childhood in order to secure from them cheap work. Young women should not be tempted to yield to the insults of men in order to supplement their inadequate wages. Wife and children should not be afflicted with poverty and disgrace by drunken husbands. Men should not get a corner on wheat and "clean up" hundreds of thousands by increasing the price of every poor man's loaf. They should not create a monopoly on meat, and then, by increasing the price, literally take it out of the mouths of those who need it most. In a word, men, as sons of a God whose glory is in the well-being of his creatures, are to be workers together with God in his creation, the consummation of which is a perfected human

society. Whatever motives and purposes are unworthy of God are unworthy of men. Jesus said, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work" (John 5:17). They were at work on the same task, and with the same end in view. The same mind should be in every man which was also in Christ Jesus. Without it he cannot live worthily of himself, or perform with fidelity the work committed to his hands.

A CAUSE NEEDED

It is in the light of man's prerogative as creator that Christ's teaching and work are to be viewed. Christ sets a distinct creative problem before man when he says: "Seek ye first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33). He makes man a partner in God's creative work when he says: "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. 28:20). John catches the vision of man's task when he says: "And he that sitteth on the throne said, Behold, I make all things new" (Rev. 21:5).

Even for his own satisfaction man's greatest

need is a cause that is big enough to spend his life for, and that will leave him at last with the conviction that his life has been well spent.

NOT PLEASURE

Pleasure or happiness is not such a cause. The universal experience is that when happiness is directly sought it eludes us. Even in youth its satisfactions pass with the moment; while age finds us shorn of power to enjoy. In age the things for which the pleasure-seeker has lived are past and dead, and if there be no greater cause at heart life stands purposeless and defeated.

NOT RICHES

Riches is not such a cause. To heap up money beyond the requirements of life, unless it be to achieve some beneficent end, is not the act of a reasonable man. If we saw one on the seashore gathering together heaps of stones, we should ask what he was going to do with them. If he answered that he was just piling them up, and kept on doing so year after year,

we should conclude that he was insane. He might say to us that he enjoyed gathering stones together, that the task was his meat and drink, that he might as well work out as rust out, that these stones might be needed some day; but when the poor fellow died and left his heaps of stones, we should believe him insane because of the purposelessness of the work in which he engaged. It was not a worthy or adequate task for a rational creature.

It would not change the case materially if the stones were of real value, like dollars, so long as the man simply piled them up, with no purpose in his work other than making heaps.

Money-getting may become a passion, the aim of which is no other than to see how large a pile one can make before he dies. Such a cause is not worthy or adequate for the investment of life.

NOT HONOUR

Nor is honour and the attainment of position such a cause, if one be selfish in seeking them. Both honour and position are soon of the past,

and the moment a man begins to live in the past he begins to die.

THE ADEQUATE CAUSE

Life needs a cause that is "new every morning and fresh every evening," a cause that remains worth while when all ordinary pleasures of life have faded away, and that possesses an undying satisfaction that surpasses them all; a cause possible to rich and poor alike, and that constitutes a life-investment which abides the same midst all the fluctuations of poverty and riches; a cause which holds the heart when honours and positions have passed to others; a cause which can be held central for life midst all pleasures, in the use of all riches, and while enjoying all honours and positions.

There is only one such cause, the cause which Christ placed before every man when he said: "Seek ye first his kingdom and his righteousness." It is the cause of getting God's will done among men, the cause of making society over into the kingdom of God. It was the cause to which Christ devoted his life, the cause

for which he died. It is the one cause worth living for and worth dying for, the only cause that makes a man superior to all the vicissitudes of life, so that, as he looks eternity in the face, he can say: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you" (John 15:27). It is the one cause possible to every man in whatever condition he may be found, the cause which alone can bring the individual to his best, the one cause that is large enough to enlist the utmost of faith, hope, and love; the cause which defies defeats, and rises above all disasters; the one undefeatable cause that a man can spend his life for and die believing in; the cause that has always enlisted the noblest souls; the cause that is in line with the unfolding of history; the only cause that is large enough, central enough, and commanding enough to bring union and harmony out of the division and discord of society; the cause which is "the one far-off divine event to which the whole creation moves."

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